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A Bunch of Fun

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BOSTON

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BAKER, Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

A Bunch of Fun

A Farce in Three Acts

By

ERASTUS OSGOOD

Author of "The Other Dog's Meat," "Her Bandit," "The Commodore," "The Harvest," "Dr. Umps"

NOTE

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WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY
Publishers of Things Theatrical
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
1922

PS 3529
.S44B8
1922

FEB -4 1922
©CLD 59845

No 1

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A Bunch of Fun

A Bunch of Fun

CHARACTERS

REV. STEPHEN GRANDON, D. D., *rector of St. Paul's.*
MARY, *his wife, "flustered on occasions."*
MARTHA, *his sister, "a trifle warped."*
CHRISTINA, *a Swede maid, "stuck on the movies."*
RAYMOND HUNTING, *a live wire.*
VERA MATHERSON, *a baseball fan.*
NINA LEE, *a stage aspirant.*
CECILY MOORLAND, *the mandolin girl.*
SYLVIA STEWART, *the dancing girl.*
LYNN LOCKWOOD, *the man "who takes off his face."*
ALICE HUNTING, *the entertaining girl.*
MURRAY KENT, *a college playwright.*
"TACKS" MULFORD, *a football star.*
MRS. SELINA BLAIR, *a pest in the parish.*

SYNOPSIS

Place, Heatherdale near New York. Time, present.
ACT I. "The Bunch" arrives.
ACT II. "The Bunch" in action.
ACT III. "The Bunch" choose partners.
The entire action takes place in the living-room at the rectory.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

DR. GRANDON. About fifty. Grey, or almost white hair. Genial and kindly, yet always retaining his dignity. Wears clerical dress.

MARY. Sweet, kindly, well bred woman about forty-five.

MARTHA. A little older than Mary. Rather spare. Hair sprinkled with grey. A brusque way of speaking, but kindly at heart. Has a keen sense of humor.

CHRISTINA. One of the best parts in the play, but can be easily spoiled if the actress *tries* to be "funny." Christina is totally unaware that she is saying or doing anything funny at all. A stocky girl, blonde.

RAYMOND. A good looking young fellow, full of life. A fairly rapid talker.

VERA. A well built girl. Takes things easy under all circumstances.

NINA. Fairly tall girl. Fine speaking voice. Has a touch of seriousness in her make-up.

CECILY. A charming butterfly type of girl. Something of a chatterbox. Able to play the mandolin.

SYLVIA. Slim, graceful girl. Able to give some pretty dance.

LYNN. A jolly type of college man. Good amateur comedian.

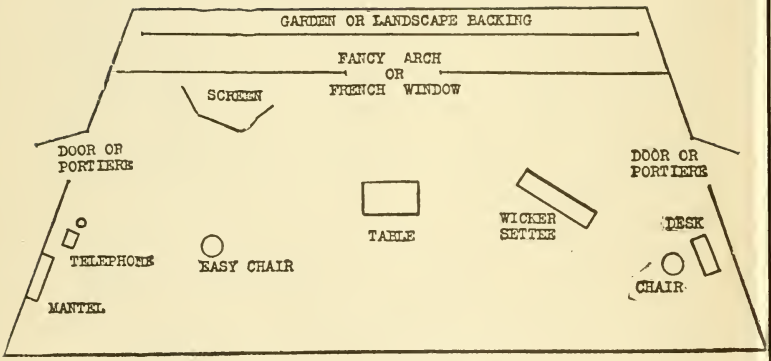
ALICE. A little older than the other girls, and a little more subdued.

MURRAY. A suggestion of the student about him. Quick to grasp a situation he might use in a play.

TACKS. Tall, and heavily built. A little slow in speaking, but by no means stupid.

MRS. BLAIR. A tall gaunt type of country gossip and busy-body. Sharp speaking voice.

NOTE. (By the author.) The lines must be learned *thoroughly* to make the play a success, as the action is rapid from almost start to finish.



STAGE SETTING

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES

ACT I

Telephone on small table, R. Account book and paper for Mary. Furnishings for her desk. Dust cloth for Martha. Postman's whistle off R. Letters for Christina to bring in. Gum for Christina. Letter with envelope for Dr. Grandon to bring in. Auto horn off L. "Choo Choo" of auto (sandpaper blocks). Golf clubs in bags. Tennis rackets, musical instrument cases, hat bag, suitcases. Letter and small package containing pool tickets. Tramp's fake face for Lynn. Mirror on or above mantel. Wicker furniture may be used throughout.

ACT II

Girl's hats and jerseys on chairs, musical instrument cases, tennis rackets. Feather duster for Martha. Book for Dr. Grandon. Mandolin and guitars to play off L. Music stand holding music for Sylvia's dance. Writing pencil and paper on table for Lynn and Nina. Flowers and straw to place in Nina's hair off L. Fire-bells to be faintly heard in distance off L.

ACT III

Subdued lights. Colored shades. Chinese lanterns. Dollar bill for Tacks. Box of candy for Sylvia. Coin for Alice. Wrist bag containing paper for Nina. Clown suit and make-up for Lynn off R. Ice-cream freezer for Christina to bring in.

A Bunch of Fun

ACT I

SCENE.—*Living-room at the rectory. Door or French window at* C. *in back wall, looking out on garden. Door at* R. *leading to rector's study. Door* L. *leading to other apartments. Room prettily furnished. Table in* C. *Screen up* R. C. *Telephone on stand* R.

(*Curtain rises on* MARY, MRS. GRANDON, *seated at desk* L., *looking over account book and papers.* MARTHA, MISS GRANDON, *dusting furniture, bric-à-brac, etc.*)

MARY (*looking up from book*). It's surprising how thoughtless and indifferent even the best of people can be sometimes.

MARTHA (*rather cold, severe voice*). Not sometimes, but as a rule. Especially those who love the uppermost rooms at feasts.

MARY. Martha dear, I am afraid you are inclined to be a—little bitter and uncharitable. I am sure the delinquents who have failed to keep up with their weekly pledges,—will in time send in their contributions.

MARTHA. Oh, probably, when they can turn their minds away from bridge and cars long enough to give a thought to the obligations they owe to their church.

MARY. Again you are unfair; many of the poorer members in our parish are here on my black list.

MARTHA (*sits, sighs*). Possibly my outlook on life has become a trifle warped. (*Slight catch in voice.*) For I have led a rather—struggling, disheartening existence.

MARY (*gently*). I know, Martha, and it takes a long while sometimes for old wounds to heal. Even the

memories of love's sweet songs often float back to us in a minor key.

MARTHA. Yes, that's true.

MARY (*cheerfully*). But Stephen never tires telling of the unfailing help and comfort you were to him in his early ministry,—until I came into his life to share his burdens and joys. Like the Martha of old you have been troubled about many things. But we have much to be thankful for. Owing to Mr. Hunting's generosity, we have the most charming rectory in the diocese.

MARTHA. And incidentally the most rooms to keep in order. It seems almost absurd, such a large house for just three persons.

MARY (*smiling*). Four; including Christina.

MARTHA. She's not a person; simply a trial.

MARY. But it was at your kindly suggestion that we took her away from her squalid home in the city ——

MARTHA. To make a movie fiend of her apparently! I fancy she went with Sophie, Mrs. Hunting's maid, to the pictures again last night.

MARY. I suppose she does find it dull and lonely out here, and must have some amusement.

(*Postman's whistle heard off.*)

MARTHA. There's the postman. (*Starts towards door* L.) I better go. Christina is probably dreaming of "The Perils of Pauline," or "The Blood-stained Will."

MARY. I shall really be obliged to speak to her about her mad infatuation. It may prevent serious complications.

MARTHA. Oh, I don't imagine she will attempt to shoot up the house, throw us off the cliff nor try to embrace the rector, yet —— (*Shrugs.*)

(*Enter* CHRISTINA *from door* R. *with letters in her hand. She is chewing gum. Speaks in Swedish broken English.*)

MARY. Ah, there you are, Christina, with the mail!

CHRIS. All by you, Missie Grandon. The Mister Rector he swipe his from the mail man. (*Hands letters.*)

MARY. Thank you, Christina. But—swipe is not a nice word for you to use.

CHRIS. (*stares at* MARY, *chewing her gum*). So?

MARY (*mild severity*). And I don't want to speak to you again, about talking to me with gum in your mouth.

CHRIS. Oh, I forgets!

(*Takes out gum and sticks it underneath the top of center table.*)

MARTHA (*disgusted*). Oh, you—you savage!

CHRIS. (*undisturbed*). No, mam, I ban a Swede.

(MARY *by face and gesture indicates that* CHRISTINA *is impossible. Opens her letters.*)

MARTHA (*sternly*). Christina, you were at the moving pictures again last evening, were you not?

CHRIS. Yes, Miss Grandon, I ban there. It was fine! "The Myste'y of de Whisperin' Pins." In five reels; you ought to see it!

MARTHA. I don't think the Mystery of the Whispering *Pines* would interest me in the least, such utter trash, and probably degrading!

CHRIS. Sure! There was two raidings. One on gamblers an' anudder on moonsheeners. It was ——

MARTHA. That will do. If you must go to the movies, try and cultivate a taste for something better, higher ——

CHRIS. Higher! Why, they soak us thirty cent and the war ticks extra.

MARTHA (*in despair*). You are—hopeless. Go back to your ironing.

CHRIS. (*goes slowly towards door* L.). Yes I better do dot, for I left the hot iron on your shirt-waist when de postman whistle, and maybe —— [*Exits* L.

(MARTHA *with a groan sinks into chair.*)

MARY (*looking up from her letter*). Well! Really—Dear me!

MARTHA. What is it, Mary? Bad news?

MARY. No, not precisely—that. Humph.—I think

you will agree, Martha, that I seldom allow myself to become flustered, but on an occasion like this ——

MARTHA. Yes, but what is the occasion? That letter——?

MARY. Is from Mrs. Hunting, asking me—very sweetly I'll admit—if I will entertain here at the rectory for the next two weeks five college girls. Only to room here; they will take their meals at The Maples. She writes that they are classmates of her daughter Alice, delightful girls, but—naturally ah—full of life. What do you—think?

MARTHA. That it is a breach of good taste for Mrs. Hunting to even propose such an arrangement!

MARY. It is certainly placing us in a very embarrassing position. The Huntings have been kind and generous ——

MARTHA. Unquestionably, but they don't own us. If they did present their former old home to St. Paul's for a rectory, that is no reason why we should be obliged to receive a parcel of flighty girls for two weeks.

MARY. Yes, of course. Yet a moment ago you were complaining that the house was absurdly large for just three persons?

MARTHA. Yes, that's true, I was, but to turn the rectory into a fraternity house—is quite a different thing.

MARY. Of course we will have to confer with Stephen before we can decide anything definitely. I wonder if he has already been approached on the subject. I fancy I can read between the lines that he has.

MARTHA. Probably. He is so kind and indulgent. No wonder that Mrs. Blair, in one of her outbursts of ill temper, accused him of being easy.

(*Enter from door* R. DR. GRANDON. *He has an open letter in his hand, the envelope of which he drops on the table* C.)

DR. G. Well, well, my dears, I have a pleasant surprise in store for you!

MARY (*smiling*). I think perhaps the surprise has already been told in a note from Mrs. Hunting.

DR. G. Ah yes, I see, of course. One can always count on Mrs. Hunting doing the correct thing.

MARTHA. I should scarcely regard a request to have our peace and quiet shattered by a troop of madcaps as being precisely the correct thing!

DR. G. (*smiling*). I am not so sure but that it is the very thing we need. Stirred up a bit by an exhilarating breeze from the outside world. I have been suspecting for sometime that we were getting into a narrow rut; and as dear brother Thaddeus used to say: Old heads can be kept young by association with young hearts. As you know we have all found some of the good people here in Heatherdale—well, a little conservative; and perhaps sometimes, a trifle unresponsive.

MARY. Yes, that's true. Does Mr. Hunting give any further particulars in his letter?

DR. G. Yes indeed. In a most cordial letter written from his office in town, (*Consults letter.*) it would seem a rather embarrassing complication has arisen, involving conflicting dates for the arrival of guests, owing to invitations being sent out by Mr. Hunting, Mrs. Hunting and Raymond without duly consulting with each other. (*Chuckles.*) As Hunting facetiously writes, The Maples has not the capacity of the ark, and only a few days ago it was discovered, that unless some dates were cancelled—an awkward thing to do—rooms must be secured outside for at least four of Alice's college friends, so you see in his dilemma he turns to us to relieve the situation. Of course we could not think of refusing.

MARY. N-o, I suppose not. But as I was saying to Martha, and I think you will agree with me, Stephen, I seldom allow myself to become flustered, but on an occasion like this ——

DR. G. An occasion, my dear, when, on the young people's arrival, they will be charmed at the graciousness of their hostess' reception.

MARTHA. And I thrown into nervous prostration.

MARY. Scarcely that, Martha, but even Mrs. Hunting admits we might find them—pretty gay.

DR. G. Naturally, why shouldn't they be? They are

young, care-free. (*Chuckles.*) Hunting predicts we would find them an inspiring bunch of fun! A list of their names, supplemented by a hint at their individual accomplishments, would seem to bear out his prediction. Just listen to this. Vera Matherson, pitcher on her college nine!

MARTHA (*groans*). She will probably break every pane of glass in the rectory.

DR. G. Nina Lee, a star in amateur dramatics.

MARTHA. A play actress.

DR. G. Cecily Moorland, leader of her college mandolin club.

MARY. And the mandolin is such a fascinating instrument.

DR. G. Sylvia Stewart, a vision in æsthetic dances.

MARTHA. A chorus girl in embryo.

DR. G. The list appeals to me as being most attractive!

MARTHA. It sounds to me like the program of a vaudeville show.

MARY. But Mrs. Hunting, in her note, speaks of five girls being in the party. You have only mentioned four.

DR. G. Ah yes, her daughter Alice will make the fifth. You see, as the girls are Alice's special guests, she has given up her own room to two of her mother's friends, which will help to relieve the congestion somewhat up at The Maples.

MARY. It will be quite a relief to have Alice here; she is such a competent, sensible girl.

DR. G. Yes indeed. You see the Huntings have done the best they could under the circumstances.

MARTHA (*sighs*). Perhaps they have. For yours and Mary's sake, Stephen, I will accept the situation as gracefully as I can, but ——

DR. G. I am sure you will, Martha. Raymond is to entertain his special chums at an impromptu camp a short distance away.

MARTHA. Which will probably be deserted most of the time, with five magnets *here*.

DR. G. (*laughing*). I fancy Hunting anticipated that

very contingency, so, as a sort of a preliminary introduction, he gives here the names of Raymond's friends. (*Reads.*) Tacks Mulford. (*Speaks.*) Huh! One of the most famous tackles on the gridiron!

MARTHA. I have seen his cut in the papers. It suggested a prize-fighter.

DR. G. I have heard Raymond speak frequently of Lynn Lockwood, a marvelously clever chap, a natural born vaudevillian!

MARTHA (*half to herself*). Our dear rectory turned into a cabaret!

DR. G. Murray Kent. Ah yes. The talented young fellow who wrote the musical comedy his class presented last year. My, my! What an array of talent we will have down here!

MARTHA (*coldly*). Does Mr. Hunting state when this swarm of locusts is likely to descend upon us?

DR. G. Martha, dear, I am afraid this prospective invasion into our quiet lives has—momentarily—ruffled your temper.

MARY (*consulting letter*). Mrs. Hunting writes that the tenth was the day set for their arrival. So that will give us nearly two full days to put the rooms in order and make other preparations.

MARTHA (*rising*). And we will attend to all the necessary arrangements personally. Christina would only prove a hindrance and a menace. I fear the movies are responsible for dissipating the minimum of wit with which nature originally endowed her.

MARY. I agree with you, Martha. I will first telephone Mrs. Hunting that we consent, then get the key to the linen closet. (*Rises.*)

(*Enter* RAYMOND HUNTING *in bicycle suit* C.)

RAY. Good-morning, doctor, Mrs. Grandon, good-morning, and you, Miss Martha. Mighty glad to find you all at home!

MARY. Good-morning, Raymond. I was about to telephone your mother ——

RAY. That you have consented to take the girls in?

(*Smiling.*) I do hope so, or there will be the deuce to pay! Pardon me!

DR. G. Oh, that's all settled. We are anticipating their arrival with genuine pleasure.

RAY. That's fine! Awfully good in you, but, (*Embarrassed laugh.*) A new muddle has arisen. Not a half hour ago, Alice received a message from Vera Matherson that they are on their way here now by auto, and like the immortal Sheridan are only five miles away. For crazy stunts, it takes a girl to pull them every time. So I rushed right over on my wheel to warn you.

MARY. Thank you, Raymond; it was thoughtful in you. So if you will excuse us? (*Going towards door* L.)

RAY. Oh, certainly. It's too bad to rush you so. The boys will all be over soon. Maybe we could help you move furniture, or something.

MARTHA. The stampede is on. I knew it.

MARY (*going*). As I have said before, I seldom allow myself to become flustered, but on an occasion ——

[*Exits with* MARTHA.

RAY. I am afraid it will put you all to a lot of bother, doctor, the girls coming in ahead of schedule time?

DR. G. Not at all. I am rather pleased, for as my brother Thaddeus used to say: better a little ahead of time than behind.

RAY. Just as soon as Alice had recovered from throwing a conniption fit on receiving Vera's message, she sent an S. O. S. call over to camp for Mulford and Kent, and down the State road they started at racing speed. I didn't quite catch the idea, probably to stage a "welcome-to-our-city" act, and I left word for Lockwood to join me here.

DR. G. I am sure the young ladies will appreciate Alice's kind intentions.

RAY (*laughs*). I get you! The more fuss that's made over them, the better they'll like it. (*Auto horn heard in distance.*) Some one is coming now, but whether it's the honored guests, Alice and her scouts or—neither, we'll have to find out. (RAY *and* DOCTOR *go up to* C. *door looking off. Auto choo-choo heard approaching,*

and girls' laughter.) That's the bunch all right! I could tell Vera's laugh among a thousand! But—where is Alice and her body-guard? I'll bet they've missed connections! Gee, that would be funny. (*Rushes out and is heard calling.*) Ha! You—Stop—This is the rectory! (*Girls' voices heard off stage all talking almost at once. Hello, Ray! Where's Alice? Did you get my message? We've had such an adventure! Yes. A hold-up!* RAY, *off stage.*) What? You haven't seen Alice? She and the boys started out to meet you.

VERA (*off stage*). We must have missed them.

NINA (*off stage*). We have met no one but hold-up men.

(*Enter from* L. MARY, MARTHA *and* CHRISTINA *with dust cloth.*)

MARY. Our young friends have arrived unexpectedly soon, have they not?

MARTHA. And Alice not here to meet them.

CHRIS. (*looking off*). Are da movie actors?

MARTHA (*sharply*). No! Go back to your dusting.

CHRIS. So.

(*Reluctantly goes to entrance, and stands in door through the following scene.*)

DR. G. Yes. it's our party. They are saying something about a hold-up.

MARTHA. The whole affair impresses me as a hold-up.

(*Enter* RAY *followed by* VERA, NINA, SYLVIA *and* CECILY. *They are carrying golf clubs, tennis rackets, musical instrument cases and bat bag. The* GRANDONS *group themselves at* R. *to receive their guests. The girls in scattered group up* L. C.)

RAY (*slightly rattled*). Dr. Grandon, Mrs. Grandon, Miss Grandon, ah—ah—this is the bunch! (*The* GIRLS *giggle.*) I know I am making a mess of it, but allow me to present Miss Matherson, (*Indicating.*) Miss Moorland, Miss Stewart and Miss Lee. (*Wipes his brow.* MRS.

GRANDON, *the* DOCTOR *and* MARTHA *come forward and graciously shake hands, etc., saying pleasant things to which the girls respond.* MARTHA *rather stiffly.*) I just want to add one more word, ladies, and it is this: That you can consider yourselves mighty fortunate in having the privilege of spending your outing in Heatherdale at the rectory with Dr. Grandon's charming household.

NINA. I am sure we are, Ray.

SYLVIA. It was more than good in you, Mrs. Grandon, to take us in.

CECILY. I hope you don't dislike the mandolin, Mrs. Grandon?

MARY. I think it a charming little instrument when played well.

RAY. That's where Cecily shines.

DR. G. Didn't I hear you telling Raymond something about a hold up? Have you been robbed?

NINA. No, doctor, thanks to Vera's pluck and her trusty bat!

DR. G. You were attacked then?

NINA. Well, yes. An attempt was made to hold us up, on the edge of a little grove just where a guide-board reads: To Chester, eight miles; to Heatherdale, six.

DR. G. I know the spot well, a lonely bit of road.

NINA. When we saw an auto just ahead of us draw up by the side of the road and stop, we scarcely gave it a thought, but when we drew nearer, and two men wearing masks jumped out, and standing in the middle of the road commanded us to stop, I for one will confess I was terribly frightened.

SYLVIA. I guess we all were.

CECILY (*shivers*). I know I was scared blue..

DR. G. Naturally, with no man to protect you.

NINA. I was at the wheel, and for a moment almost paralyzed. Vera, in a voice that did not tremble a bit, calmly remarked: "Well, what's the idea?" And one of the men gruffly replied: "Your money and jewels, please, is the answer! You needn't get out," he ordered, "just hand over the goods." Vera quietly informed him that her valuables were in her suit-case, and to come and get

them, and reached down into the body of the car. The man came around to her side, but instead of her suit-case, she brought up her bat bag, and quick as a flash brought it down on the man's head, who with a gasp staggered and fell!

MARTHA. Served him right.

(*Applause from the others.*)

NINA. Perhaps her quick action inspired me with courage, for I recovered my wits sufficiently to throw in the clutch, and on we rushed like mad!

RAY. Good work!

DR. G. Yes, indeed. Allow me to congratulate you, Miss Vera, and you, too, Miss Lee.

MARTHA. The police should be notified at once.

MARY. You were certainly very brave and clever, Miss Matherson.

VERA. Thank you, Mrs. Grandon. Playing baseball teaches one to think quickly.

DR. G. Do you think you could identify the highwayman?

VERA. Yes, doctor, I believe I could. There was also a woman in the party, who kept out of sight in the car. As we dashed past I heard her scream—"Max,"—or a name that sounded like that—"are you badly hurt?"

RAY. Are you sure it wasn't Tacks?

VERA. It might have been. Why?

RAY. I'll bet a five spot that your highwayman was Tacks Mulford and his companion Murray Kent, and the mysterious lady in the car was Alice!

ALL. Alice?

RAY. The surest thing you know, and that they were trying to put over one of Kent's brilliant practical jokes. Talk about the biter getting bit! Mommer! It's a scream!

VERA. Tacks Mulford, the football star? Oh, I may have hurt him seriously!

RAY. Not a chance. Tacks has been knocked unconscious so many times, he's got quite used to it.

MARY. Well, of course it may have all been a joke,

but pretty dangerous fun I should think. But I am sure you young ladies would like to go to your rooms after your long adventurous ride.

CECILY. Thank you, Mrs. Grandon, we are a trifle dusty.

DR. G. Will you not permit me to carry some of your traps?

RAY. Yes, of course, let me. Then I'll look after your car.

VERA. Thank you both, perhaps this time; but, with your approval, Dr. Grandon, we are going to establish a rule while here of waiting on ourselves.

DR. G. Now that's very kind and considerate in you, Miss Vera. (*Smiling.*) We'll have to talk that arrangement over a little later.

(*Laughs as he picks up suit-case and exits, as does* RAY *with hands full.* MARY *and* MARTHA *follow with the girls. The bat bag is left behind.* VERA *and* SYLVIA *bring up the rear.*)

VERA. Isn't the doctor an old dear?

SYL. Yes, and Mrs. Grandon. But the sister?

VERA (*rolling up her eyes*). She's a frost. Just wait and see.

[*Exit.*

(LYNN LOCKWOOD *appears at back from* R. *Looks about, then enters* C. *Spies bat bag, picks it up and grins.*)

RAY (*reënters from* L.). Well, old man, you got my message?

LYNN. Yes, and in the words of Metamora, you have sent for me and I have come. But I am a little foggy concerning the present action of the play?

RAY. Quite so, old dear. (*Laughs.*) It's not quite clear to me either.

LYNN. As I understood the plot outlined by Alice, her girl friends were to arrive on Wednesday. Then she 'phones the camp that the dears were on the way, kid-

naps Tacks and Murray and starts a Barney Oldfield stunt in the direction of Chester, and you pass me the cue to meet you here; am I right or,—am I left?

RAY. You have your lines letter-perfect. The bunch have arrived, and are at present dolling up. They report a thrilling tale about being held up on the road from Chester. Masked men! Mysterious lady! Boo! Regular movie stuff!

LYNN. Hold up! Were they robbed?

RAY. No. It seems Vera crabbed the star part in the film. Sprang a Babe Ruth act by tapping the would-be Claud Duval over the dome with a bat. Nina put spurs to the car, and for the fade away they shot out of the danger zone in a cloud of dust and glory.

LYNN. Well—what—do—you—know about that?

RAY. I suspect more than appears on the surface.

LYNN. That the hold-up may have been a fake?

RAY. The boy has guessed right the very first time. At least it looks to me like one of Kent's phony practical jokes.

LYNN. It may have been at that. (*Grinning.*) Kent thinks up this Charlie Chaplin senario, and Tacks, the poor boob, gets the beating up. Huh. Quite classic for Tacks. Did you tell the girls you thought it might be a frame-up?

RAY. Yes, but I didn't put it too strong, so as to dampen their pride and pleasure.

LYNN. As Alice and her confederates have not shown up yet, the plot bristles with possibilities.

RAY. And we may look for a climax almost any minute. Did any mail come for me?

LYNN. Yes, a letter and a small package.

(*Hands them to* RAY.)

RAY (*glances at letter*). Ugh. A bill from my tailor. (*Opens package.*) Huh, old sport Davis has sent down a bunch of pool tickets for next week's games. I forgot to tell him that I was going to cut out that bunk. Well, maybe some of the fellows may want to try their luck.

LYNN. Sure they will. I'll take four of them now.

RAY (*hands him four in the package they came in. Puts the remainder in the envelope the* DOCTOR *dropped on table*). Did you get any mail?

LYNN (*grinning*). Yes, the tramp's false face I sent for, and it's a dandy! (*Produces from pocket a hideous mask of tramp.*) I am going to give Kent the scare of his young life some night, a little of his own medicine in the way of a practical joke, and see how he likes it.

(*Puts on mask.*)

RAY. It's a whoop! 'Twill throw him into a panic. It's great. But say, old man, excuse me for a few minutes, will you? I promised the girls I would look after their car.

(*Exits, leaving envelope containing pool tickets on table. Soon auto heard going away.* LYNN, *with mask still on, goes up* R. *and surveys himself in mirror. Turns up coat collar, chuckles.*)

CHRIS. (*heard outside* L.). Yes, Missie Grandon, I tell him. (LYNN *dodges behind screen.* CHRISTINA *enters, picks up bat bag. Examines end as if looking for spot that hit robber. Shakes her head mysteriously.* LYNN *comes out from behind screen.* CHRISTINA *looks up and sees him. She yells, then rushes at him with bat bag threateningly.*) You robber! You hold-up man! I show you, I show you!

(*Chases him around room.*)

LYNN. Hey! Stop it, you confounded little goose! (*Tears off mask.*) I'm not a robber. I'm one of Mr. Hunting's guests.

CHRIS. (*stares at him in wonder*). So! Can you take off any more faces?

LYNN (*yells*). No! Say, does my face look as bad as that?

CHRIS. (*quietly*). I—dunno,—maybe.

LYNN. Well, that's a swift one. I must tell that to Ray while it's warm. (*Runs off* C. *then* L.)

(CHRISTINA *goes up to* C. *and looks after him.* MRS. SELINA BLAIR *appears at* C. *from* R., *standing behind* CHRISTINA *for an instant watching* LYNN. *Speaks with country twang.*)

MRS. B. Christina, who is that young man, and why is he runnin' away?

CHRIS. I—tink he go—to find anudder face.

MRS. B. (*sharply*). Another face? What's the matter with his own face?

CHRIS. He say, it look bad. But I like it better dan de face he take off.

MRS. B. Took off his face? Christina, be you crazy, or jist tryin' to be smart?

CHRIS. No, Misses—ah—ah—here is de one he take off. (*Goes to table and takes up mask.*) Miss-es ——

MRS. B. Mrs. Selina Blair. You must have heard Dr. Grandon mention my name.

CHRIS. Oh, yes, he call you dat name, but his sister she say your name is "Bossie."

MRS. B. Oh, she does, does she? Humph. See here. A party of young women have taken rooms here, ain't they?

CHRIS. Yes, Misses Bossie—ah—ah—Mrs. Blair.

MRS. B. Who be they?

CHRIS. I—tink da be movie actors.

MRS. B. Movie actors, here at the rectory! What can Dr. Grandon be thinkin' of! (*Picks up mask.*) Probably that young man was a movie actor too. Huh! Nice goin's on. (*Picks up envelope; pool tickets drop out. Reads.*) New York Nationals, Chicago Americans, Brooklyn, Detroit. Pool tickets! I see our hired man have some jist like 'em, and they came by mail addressed to Dr. Grandon! I'll jist take one of 'em along to produce as ev'dence. (*Going towards* C. *door.*) You can tell Dr. Grandon there will be a special parish meetin' called on Saturday afternoon at three o'clock sharp, and that his presence is requested. I guess he, and his sister Martha, will find that Selina Blair can be bossie to some purpose. (*Sniffs and exits tossing her head.*)

CHRIS. (*watches her out*). So? [*Slowly exits* C.

(*Enter from* L. DOCTOR, MRS. GRANDON *and the* GIRLS. *The latter wear simple summer gowns.*)

DR. G. As you young ladies, I believe, are each devoted to some favorite amusement or diversion, so I have my hobby, the cultivation of pansies. I have collected sixteen varieties.

CECILY. Oh, how lovely! Pansies are my favorite flowers.

DR. G. Indeed? Then I shall take great pride and pleasure in showing you my beds.

VERA. Your beautifully kept tennis court attracted my attention as we drove up.

DR. G. Naturally, my young people have played many an exciting game out there, and I hope to witness a sample of your skill.

SYL. It is certainly a lovely smooth bit of lawn. How I should love to dance out there in the moonlight.

DR. G. (*smiling*). Perhaps you will be given an opportunity to do so, Miss Sylvia. (*Addressing group.*) On learning of your varied accomplishments, the idea occurred to me at once of giving a lawn party for the benefit of my favorite mission.

SYL. Oh, we'd just love to!

NINA. Please do, Dr. Grandon!

VERA. 'Twould be a big success!

DR. G. You are all very kind. I will have to take the matter up with some of my church people, and see what can be done.

MARY (*who has been looking off* C.). Here comes Alice now with *one* young man. I wonder if Raymond's surmise was correct, and that Mr. Tacks, as you call him, was rendered *hors de combat?*

VERA (*joining* MARY *at back*). Hoo-hoo! (*Waving her hand.*) Alice, here we are! Where have you been?

ALICE (*calling*). Vera! Are the girls all here?

VERA. Yes, of course; where would they be?

(*Rushes out to meet* ALICE.)

NINA. Let's not say a word about our hold-up, and

see if she'll allude to it! Ray may have been mistaken, you know.

SYL. If she's guilty we'll soon discover it.

DR. G. I will admit I am eager to know the facts myself.

ALICE (*enters with* VERA). We might have missed you by trying a short cut.

VERA. Y-e-s, so you might.

(MURRAY KENT *follows the girls in.*)

ALICE (*rushes to* NINA). You dear old Nina! (*Kisses her.*) And Sylvia and Cecily, I am so glad to see you.

MARY. And this I presume is Mr. Kent?

ALICE. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Grandon. (*Laughing.*) Yes, Murray Kent, the famous playwright. And Dr. Grandon, Mr. Kent.

DR. G. Glad to meet Mr. Kent. (*Shakes hands.*)

ALICE. Miss Stewart, I think you have met.

MURRAY. Yes, I think I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Stewart once.

NINA. Twice, (*Smiling.*) if I am not mistaken, Mr. Kent.

ALICE. Nina, of course you know. And this is Miss Matherson and Miss Moorland.

(MURRAY *and girls bow, etc.*)

VERA. But where is Mr. Mulford? Ray tells us you kidnapped him from the camp along with Mr. Kent?

ALICE (*slightly confused*). Ah—yes—of course, so I did. (*Forced laugh.*) Do you know, I think Tacks must be in love; he seemed so terribly anxious to get his mail. He left us to rush over to camp. (MURRAY *is talking with* VERA *up stage in pantomime. The others exchange significant glances.*) It was just dear in you, Mrs. Grandon, to take us in.

MARY. I am sure we will all enjoy your bright company very much.

DR. G. Yes indeed. For as my dear brother Thaddeus used to say: As sunshine and showers are essential to keep green the sturdy oaks as well as flowers, so can

the smiles and patter of youthful laughter keep fresh sweet memories in the heart of old age.

CECILY. That is a pretty sentiment, Dr. Grandon, and I feel certain your brother must have possessed a sunny disposition of his own.

DR. G. He did, Miss Cecily, and radiated happiness wherever he went.

NINA. I can't see where we went wrong? We followed the guide posts faithfully!

ALICE. I dare say it was our fault. We acted very stupidly.

VERA (*to* MURRAY). I am sorry you were unable to bring Mr. Mulford with you. He is such a famous athlete, I wanted so much to meet him.

MUR. (*confused*). Ah, yes; ah, Tacks was sorry too. But you see (*Hesitates.*) he had to keep an appointment.

VERA. With a doctor?

MUR. Ah! Oh, no!

VERA. With a pretty Red Cross nurse then, perhaps, first aid to the injured, and all that sort of thing?

(*A ripple of suppressed laughter from the company.*)

ALICE (*very much confused*). Why! What are you all laughing at?

VERA (*laughing*). Oh, nothing. (*Sneezes.*) Just a touch of hay fever.

SYL. Perhaps you got overheated with your batting practice, Vera?

ALICE. Batting practice?

SYL. Yes, just enough of a hit to make a home run.

(*All burst into laughter.*)

ALICE. Then you did recognize us! (*Sits and buries her face in her hand.*) I am heartily ashamed of the whole foolish business.

MUR. That's not fair for you to take the blame, Alice. It was all my fault. When we saw you coming, the fool idea popped into my head of playing at hold-up; I suggested it to Tacks, and it struck us both as being

funny just at the moment. Alice consented, never dreaming but that you would discover it was a fake almost at once.

NINA. Well, we didn't. The scare worked all right. You could see that by the way we put on speed.

ALICE. Then how did you catch on?

NINA. When we told our thrilling adventure to Ray, and especially when we came to the part about the mysterious woman in the car calling, as we understood, "Max, are you hurt?", he went into roars of laughter, and offered to bet any amount that Tacks was the name called.

VERA. But tell me, Mr. Kent, did I hurt Tacks badly? and was he very angry?

MUR. Angry? Not a bit. Even while bathing a lump on his head, he laughed immoderately. Called you a plucky girl, and that Ty Cobb would have to look out for his laurels. He wants to meet you so that he can offer you ——

ALICE (*laughing*). Murray, don't tell her any more, she is bursting with conceit as it is.

VERA. Well, I'll tell the world that he is a dead game sport, and I'll accept.

NINA. Go slow, Vera. It may be his heart he has to offer! (*All laugh.*)

RAY (*enters from* C. *all excited.* MARTHA *from* L.). Hello, everybody, I am mighty glad to see you all! Talk about your three-ring circus and a bally-hoo thrown in!

ALICE. For pity's sake, Ray, what's happened now?

RAY. That old cat Mrs. Blair has happened, and I wish she never had.

DR. G. Mrs. Blair; why, please explain, Raymond.

RAY. I'll try to, doctor, but I'm all up in the air, and will have to explain in bunches, for she's on her way here now. She is spreading a report through the village that the rectory is filled with movie actors and actresses. One man in particular who has a dozen faces. But that's not the worst, that the rector is selling pool tickets on baseball games; she has one of the tickets to show as evidence!

DR. G. Bless my soul! Why—why—the woman must have gone insane!

MARTHA. She didn't have far to go.

RAY. I overtook her on the road, and opened on her with both barrels.

DR. G. What defense did she have to offer?

RAY. From her mistaken viewpoint, a fairly good one. She states she called here this morning and was told your guests were movie-picture actors.

MARY. I was not aware that the woman had been in the house in a week; were you, Martha?

(MARTHA *shakes her head dismally.*)

DR. G. And I selling pool tickets, and she claims she obtained one here? Why, I don't believe I would know a pool ticket if I saw one.

RAY. I am ashamed to say I would. A bunch was sent to me this morning. (*Feeling in pockets.*) And I'm blessed if I know what I did with them.

MARY. But she must have met some one here who told her our guests were movie stars.

ALICE. But the man with a dozen faces, who can he be?

MARTHA. I have a horrible suspicion that Christina is at the bottom of this. She is a haunting menace. I'll call her. (*Goes to* L. *calling.*) Christina, come here.

RAY. Well, what with hold-ups, knock-outs, and an insane woman at large, one might say we have opened the exercises at Heatherdale in pretty good shape.

(CHRISTINA *placidly enters chewing gum.*)

MARY. Christina, was Mrs. Blair here this morning?

CHRIS. Yes, Missie Grandon, she say her name was Mrs. Blair. Oh! I forgot. I was to tell the Mister Rector, there was to be a Polish meeting on Saturday, and he was invited.

MARY. Did you tell her our guests were movie actors?

CHRIS. She say da was, and I say, I tink so.

MARY. Did you tell her there was a man here with different faces?

CHRIS. She seen him. He could take off his face. He scare me, and I chase him wid a club!

MUR. Insane germs must be in the air, and Christina has swallowed a mouthful.

DR. G. Christina, did you tell Mrs. Blair that I was selling pool tickets?

CHRIS. No, Mister Grandon, she find 'em!

DR. G. Found them? Where?

CHRIS. On de table. Dar da are now. She called 'em fool tickets, I dunno.

RAY. Great Scott, they're mine! I must have left them there this morning. Fool tickets is right.

ALICE. Oh, Mrs. Grandon, I am so distressed, I am afraid we have brought you into no end of trouble.

MARY. Not at all, my dear. Christina, are you sure it was Mrs. Blair?

CHRIS. Yes, Missie Grandon, she ask me, and I say I hear de rector call her Misses Blair, but that Miss Martha she allus call her Misses Bossie.

MARTHA. Horrors! This settles it, Stephen. I insist that you send this—creature back to the city at once. And if I had my way I'd hand her over to the police!

(MRS. BLAIR *appears at back.*)

CHRIS. (*in a wail*). Oh, good Mister Rector, please don't send me back to de city, and hand me to policemans!

(*Bursting into tears she throws herself into* DR. GRANDON'S *arms.*)

DR. G. (*struggling to push her away*). Christina, restrain yourself.

MRS. B. (*coming down to front*). No, I shouldn't think you would want to leave here where the rector treats you so nice. (*Sternly.*) Dr. Grandon, there will be a parish-meeting called for Saturday at three o'clock sharp.

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same as in* ACT I; *a few days later. The room somewhat in disorder. Girls' hats and jerseys on chairs, musical instrument cases, and tennis rackets about.* DR. GRANDON *seated* R. C. *at table reading a book.* MARY *at desk writing.* MARTHA *with feather duster in her hand at back, business of picking up a fan here, a glove there and bits of flowers scattered about.*

(As the curtain rises mandolins and guitar are heard off back and continue a short selection through the opening dialogue. MARY *looks up from her writing, and half unconsciously begins beating time with her pen-holder. Soon the* DOCTOR *begins waving his hand to the rhythm. Then* MARTHA *stops her work and her duster sways back and forth to the measures. When she notices the actions of the others, she stops suddenly.)*

DR. G. (*glances up from his book and watches* MARY, *smiling*). Well, my dear, I see you are being lured away from your writing by the young people's charming music.

MARY (*a little ashamed*). I—I believe I was beating time. There is something irresistible about the music of string instruments.

DR. G. So there is. (*Laughs.*) A moment more, and I dare say I would have been waving an imaginary baton.

MARTHA. You have been doing so for the past few minutes.

DR. G. Not really? Well, I am glad I fell under the spell, for as Brother Thaddeus often quoted: "The man that hath no music in himself, nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils."

MARTHA. Then Mrs. Blair must be stone deaf.

DR. G. Poor Mrs. Blair, I am afraid she is inclined to jump at conclusions too hastily.

MARTHA. I can see nothing but downright petty malice in her hurrying to spread a slander concerning her rector. Ignorance and stupidity can be offered as an excuse for Christina's part in the unfortunate affair.

MARY (*with light laugh*). Had we wished for revenge, we certainly have it. I understand Mrs. Blair is being subjected to no end of chaffing by many of our staunch friends in the village.

DR. G. Oh, I am sorry to hear that; perhaps after all it may have been a laudable jealous fear that the rectory by some mistake was not being treated with proper respect, which prompted her to be, well, possibly overzealous.

MARTHA (*impatiently*). And that her rector had degenerated into a pool seller. Stephen, if I didn't know you to be the best brother in the world, I should openly denounce you as a hypocrite.

DR. G. (*laughing*). Well—well! I am certainly getting it from all sides. By one faction that I am too bad, and now from you that I am too suspiciously good. I see. (*Sighs.*) Like the unfortunate man in the fable I find I can't please everybody.

MARY. Well, you cannot complain that your proposal to give the lawn party did not meet with unanimous approval.

DR. G. With genuine enthusiasm. It was most gratifying. I prophesy it will prove a great success. (*Chuckles.*) And now I am going to give Martha a shock. I have about decided to appoint Mrs. Blair chairman of the executive committee. I think you will admit, Martha, that she is an indefatigable worker, and besides it may act as a panacea to silence wagging tongues.

MARTHA (*looks at him calmly for an instant, then remarks quietly*). Stephen, dear, you are more subtle than I should have believed. Your revenge will be complete, overwhelming.

DR. G. (*in astonishment*). Complete, overwhelming?

Why—why, I am not seeking revenge. In what way am I subtle? You are talking in enigmas, Martha.

MARTHA. Our young friends are to furnish the entertainment at the lawn party, are they not?

DR. G. Why—yes, they have kindly offered to do so.

MARTHA. Possibly you observed that Mrs. Blair did not make a knock-out hit, as Raymond would say, with the young people when she called here the other day. Their glances conveyed much to me.

DR. G. Why—yes, I will admit that Mrs. Blair's attitude may have seemed to them unwarrantable, still I fail to see ——

MARY (*laughing*). I think I am beginning to catch the drift of Martha's innuendoes, but I am sure the young people are too well bred and kindly to antagonize or embarrass Mrs. Blair in any way.

MARTHA. Oh, I don't apprehend that Miss Vera will again resort to her bat, or young Lockwood attempt to frighten her with his masks, but I fancy they will make their presence felt; and some of the details incidental to this party may linger in Mrs. Blair's memory for some time. I trust I have not given *you* a shock, Stephen, dear.

DR. G. (*smiling*). Not at all. (*Laughing.*) A fig for your predictions! I fancy you will find that Mrs. Blair will be quite capable of riding over all obstacles.

(*Rises, going towards door* R.)

MARTHA. Probably, but she may encounter a few bewildering hurdles on the way.

DR. G. We'll see. But I must be on my way to consult with one of my committees. We must do all in our power to make this lawn party the event of the season.

[*Exit* R.

MARTHA. I hope Stephen will succeed in keeping Mrs. Blair subdued as effectually as Christina appears to be.

MARY (*half laughing*). Poor Christina, her fear of being sent back to the city was almost pathetic.

MARTHA. I wonder if her manner of embracing Stephen was according to standards approved by Miss Pick-

ford or Norma Talmadge? I think I better go and reconnoitre; she may be planning some new escapade worthy the skill and daring of William S. Hart or Fairbanks.

MARY. I will leave Christina to your tender mercies. (*Rises.*) While I go over to Mrs. Perry's for a moment. Her little girl is quite ill.

MARTHA. Oh, I am sorry to hear that. I wonder if there is anything I can do?

MARY. Perhaps, I will see. [*They exit* L.

(*Enter* CECILY *and* RAY. *She has her mandolin. They sit* R. C. *Their dialogue should be taken brightly.*)

RAY. Your turn will make the hit of the evening, Cecily; you sure can make that little box sing.

CECILY. Oh, quit your jollying, Ray. But why didn't you tell me your friend Mulford was musical? He played a dandy second.

RAY. Then he played an instrument that no clever woman has ever learned to play.

CECILY. Why, what's that?

RAY. A second fiddle. (*Grinning.*)

CECILY. Pooh! Smarty, is that original?

RAY. Yes, I read it in "*Life.*"

CECILY. But Ray, have you noticed how thick Vera and Mulford are becoming? Only known each other three days, and now it's Vera and Tacks if you please. (*Shrugs.*) But, of course, it was a foregone conclusion.

RAY. Ah. Why was it?

CECILY. Because she made such a stunning hit the first time they met. (*Laughs.*) Now will you be good?

RAY. Ah, I see,—No wonder he got the swelled head.

(VERA *and* TACKS *appear at back. She has a guitar, he a mandolin.*)

VERA. My! It must have been exciting; only five minutes to go, and Markam, the rush, tearing down the field! Well, go on!

TACKS. He would have made a touchdown sure, only ——

VERA (*all excited*). Yes, well what?

TACKS (*grinning*). Ah, somebody got in his way. There was a crash ——

VERA. And that somebody was you? The hero to win the game.

TACKS. Well, when I came to, they were yelling that we had won.

CECILY. Oh, you two cranks. Do you do nothing but talk sport?

VERA. Well, I like that, when we have been playing back time to you for the last half hour.

CECILY. Oh, that reminds me! I have a riddle to ask you. What instrument is it a clever woman has never learned to play?

TACKS. Not being a woman I refuse to answer.

VERA. Well, I'll bite, what is it?

CECILY (*rattled*). Ah, a bass viol! No, I mean a second fiddle.

(*They all roar with laughter.*)

RAY. Cecily, stick to your music; you are not a comedian.

CECILY. I guess that's right. But where are Lynn and Sylvia? Hasn't he arranged the program yet?

TACKS. They are out in the garage practising a crazy sort of a dance.

CECILY. Pooh, just an excuse to spoon.

VERA. The sketch Murray has written, or probably cribbed, for him and Nina to do must be something weird.

RAY. How weird?

VERA. She was sitting up on the limb of a tree, and he, with his hand on his heart, was looking up at her like a sick cat.

RAY. Help, Police! You don't suppose they are going to spring the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet?

TACKS. Scarcely. He told me it was going to be something screamingly funny.

CECILY. So the balcony scene would be if they attempted it.

VERA. Oh, I guess it is going to be comedy all right.

Alice seemed to be sort of directing the act, and was laughing fit to kill. Come on, Tacks, let's have a little warming up. I feel just like going outside and tossing over a few. (*Goes to back of stage, business of winding up and pitching an imaginary ball.* TACKS *takes his place as catcher grotesquely. Enter* LYNN *and* SYLVIA.) Well, how comes on the Follies of 1921?

SYL. Couldn't be better! The Lamb's Gambol will have nothing on us.

VERA. What did you say the name of yours and Lynn's dance was to be? The Kangaroo Kick, or The Baboon Bounce?

SYL. Vera, don't be coarse.

VERA (*with derisive laugh*). Couldn't be if I tried. Say, Tacks, how is this for a fade-away?

(*Pantomime of pitching.*)

TACKS (*pantomime catching*). Won-der-ful! It would fool any one, except the batter.

SYL. The dance you saw Lynn and me trying out was just a little encore bit we may introduce for the wind-up of his specialty.

RAY (*grinning*). I see. As a sort of apology of what has gone before.

CECILY. What are you going to give for your solo number, Sylvia?

SYL. I thought of putting on "A Venetian Dream." It's very simple but so dainty.

CECILY. Oh, I just love that.

(*Humming melody of dance.*)

LYNN. "A Venetian Dream." Then of course the mandolins ought to play for the dance. It would be most effective.

VERA. Is the guitar part hard?

CECILY. No. Time keys of G and C. I think I have the music here. (*Looks over music, selects a piece, and places it on racks for* TACKS, VERA *and herself.*) Do stop your windmill foolishness long enough to try it, Vera.

SYL. It would be pretty. As Cecily says, we might try it. (*Smiling.*) But if you fall down I'll discharge you.

VERA (*they tune*). Cecily, your X please.

(*If the performers are unable to play mandolins and guitar, by a slight substitution in the lines one of the cast might play the piano or violin.*)

(SYLVIA *executes a pretty fancy dance.*)

LYNN. That's fine. (*They all applaud.*)

CECILY. Oh, we're the goods all right.

(*Enter* ALICE *and* MURRAY.)

LYNN. Well, how did the sketch go?

ALICE. Immense! Nina is a wonder, and Murray has written such clever lines.

CECILY. What is the name of the sketch, Murray?

MUR. I think I shall call it "The Rube and the Daisy."

RAY. What do you suppose the audience will call it?

MUR. Whatever they blame please. You make me tired.

SYL. Where is Nina?

MUR. Stopped to speak to Miss Grandon, who was on her way to see some sick youngster. That reminds me; she wants you all to vamose, so she can have this room to herself to run through her readings, and she said something about trying on a new gown for her act.

VERA. Oh, very well. If that's the way she feels about it, I move we adjourn to the tennis-court. What say?

CECILY. I'm with you. We have more than enough to play mixed doubles.

MUR. As you have more than enough, without me, if you don't mind I'll stroll over to camp. I want to smooth out some of the lines in the sketch. Should you want to speak to me, call up there.

RAY. We'll get Christina to do the 'phoning; she might suggest some good comedy stuff.

MUR. (*laughing*). She might do just that very little

thing. I was talking senarios with her the other day. Bye-bye. [*Exits at back.*

ALICE (*going towards door* L.). I'll join you later. Perhaps Nina might want me to act as lookout, in case Mrs. Blair might drop in again unexpectedly.

RAY (*in disgust*). Mrs. Blair, she's the limit.

LYNN. Only surpassed by that exotic violet, Christina.

CECILY. I suspect it is Nina's dress you want to see, more than to protect her from Mrs. Blair, that is keeping you from tennis.

ALICE. I'll confess that it is, Cecily. (*Laughing.*)

SYL. Well, if Mrs. Blair does come poking around, make it interesting for her.

VERA. And put in an extra dig for me.

(*All move up towards* C. *door.*)

SYL. Where on earth did I leave my racket?

TACKS. I saw a racket out in the hammock.

SYL. Oh, yes, I remember now.

(*All exit except* LYNN *and* ALICE.)

LYNN (ALICE *about to exit* L.). Just a moment, Alice, a word on the quiet. For a special reason I want to get a line on that sketch of Murray's, "The Rube and the Daisy."

ALICE. It's very clever. The plot, not especially novel. A country boy falls in love with a pretty city boarder. Its particular charm lies in the awkward, yet rather appealing, way he reveals his love to the girl. Murray does some really good work in that scene. I found myself laughing, and at the same time there was a tug at my heart. As the critics say, he played convincingly.

LYNN. Of course he did. He was speaking from his heart.

ALICE. Lynn, do you really think so?

LYNN. The surest thing you know. I have suspected for some time that he was gone on Nina, and didn't quite have the sand to tell her so.

ALICE. Well, now we are exchanging confidences, I am quite sure that Nina is awfully fond of Murray. Oh, it was not all acting the way she looked at him to-day at rehearsal. Ah, ah, couldn't we do something to kind of—smooth the way for them, so we could almost hear the tinkle of wedding bells in the not too distant future?

LYNN. I can see you are a natural match-maker. So unusual, for a woman, but leave the affair for the time being in the hands of little Lynnie. I have a plot half worked out in my mind. Really, a most novel scheme. (ALICE *is about to speak.*) All the help you can give me at present is to drop, casually, you understand, a good word for Murray in Nina's shell-like ear. You press that little button, and I'll do the rest.

ALICE (*going*). All right. But I can't see any reason for you being so mysterious. (*At door* L.)

LYNN. Be a good child and ask no questions. And on your way out, please tell Christina to come here a moment.

ALICE (*in dismay*). Is Christina to be your confidant? Mercy! Then I can see Nina's and Murray's romance debased as the motif for a moving picture horror.

[*Exits* L.

(LYNN, *laughing to himself, goes to table and begins writing on a slip of paper. Chuckles as he writes.* CHRISTINA *enters, chewing gum.*)

LYNN. Well, Christina, how are the movies these days? (CHRISTINA *comes close, looks at his face up and down.* LYNN *laughs.*) Yes, that's my real face. It won't come off.

CHRIS. So. (*Sadly.*) I don't go to the movies no more. Miss Martha say they bad for me. I dunno.

LYNN. Now that's a shame. What kind of pictures do you like best?

CHRIS. I like, where they make love, and get all married.

LYNN. Of course you do. Marriage is always lovely, on the screen. And the scenes where the villain tries to keep the lovers apart ——

CHRIS. (*excited*). Yes, I love dat. It's fierce!

LYNN. Did you see the picture "Faithful Nancy"?

CHRIS. Yes, I seen dat, where da lock de princess up in the cooler!

LYNN. That wasn't a cooler. That was a castle tower.

CHRIS. Sophie say it was a cooler. I dunno.

LYNN. And I know the part you like best, where Nancy, the maid, carries the princess' letters to her lover.

CHRIS. (*excited*). Sure. Sophie say dat maid was all to the mustard.

LYNN. And Sophie was quite right. How would you like to play a part like Nancy, in real life, and make two lovers happy?

CHRIS. I'd like it fine. But Miss Martha would hand me over to the policemans.

LYNN. I hope Miss Martha is not so lacking in sentiment as to do that. But Miss Martha need know nothing about it.

CHRIS. (*shakes her head doubtfully*). I dunno.

LYNN. She couldn't find out, for you wouldn't have to carry any letters, just telephone them.

CHRIS. Who is de lovers?

LYNN. Mr. Kent and Miss Lee.

CHRIS. Is she going to be locked up in a castle tower?

LYNN. No, I hope not.

CHRIS. (*thoughtful for an instant*). But da talk together eve'y day. Why don't he tell her?

LYNN. That's just it. He wants to, but is too bashful. You know what I mean?

CHRIS. Yes. (*Shyly.*) I get dat way sometimes. I turn red and feel cold.

LYNN. Yes, that's a marked symptom. It's like this. I want you to telephone Mr. Kent, he's out at our camp, this message. I've written it out. It is what Miss Lee would say to him if she dared.

CHRIS. Is Miss Lee bashful too? Ain't that fierce?

LYNN. It's worse, it's annoying. So I thought you might play a part like Nancy, and perhaps bring the young lovers together. See? So in about fifteen min-

utes you are to call up Mr. Kent. This is the number you are to call. 7-9-3-R. I have written the number very plainly, 7-9-3-R, and this is what you have been told or overheard Miss Lee say. (*Reads what he has written.*) "I think Murray the dearest man I ever knew. So fine looking and clever. And the way he makes love in the sketch would set any girl's heart on fire. Why doesn't he speak to me that way for himself?" Now let's see if you can read it.

CHRIS. (*reads haltingly*). I—t'ink—Murray—is de darndest man ——

LYNN. No! Dearest man.

CHRIS. Oh, yes, dearest man. I—know, so—fine looking and—clover ——

LYNN. And clever.

CHRIS. And clever, and—the way he—make love in de—skitch ——

LYNN. No. Sketch!

CHRIS. In de sketch,—would set—any girl's—house—on fire ——

LYNN. No! Any girl's heart on fire.

CHRIS. Why don't he speak to me—like dat for himself?

LYNN. Think you understand it all right?

CHRIS. I t'ink so. (*Prodigious sigh.*) Gee! Dat's hot stuff.

LYNN. Now remember, you are not to call him up for, say fifteen minutes. He has just started for the camp. And be sure no one is about when you 'phone. You know how to telephone, don't you?

CHRIS. Yes, Miss Martha show me. You take down the handle and say, hello, dis is de rect'y.

LYNN. Yes, that's the idea. Then you must call that you want number 7-9-3-R. Now, let me see. What shall we do with this paper? You might lose it. Let—me—see. (*Feeling in pockets, brings out envelope.*) Ah, the very thing! And it's addressed to Kent, too. It's the envelope his trout flies came in. (*Laughs.*) And maybe he'll jump at this bait. So we'll put the message in this. (*Does so.*) And now where shall we hide it? (*Picks*

up book on table and reads title.) "Rome Under Nero." No one but the doctor would be likely to read that book. (*Puts envelope in book with edge sticking out.*) Now you will know just where to find it? 'Phone just what I have written, as coming from Miss Lee, and you'll be a "Faithful Nancy" for fair. Good luck, Christina. I believe I'll go out by the way of the study. [*Exits door* R.

CHRIS. (*looks after him, shaking her head doubtfully*). I dunno.

(NINA *enters from* L., *dressed in the robes of Ophelia, her hair down her back, flowers and straw in hair, etc. She is followed by* ALICE. CHRISTINA *turns and sees* NINA. *Gives half-smothered scream.*)

ALICE. Don't be frightened, Christina, Miss Lee is dressed up like one of the characters in "Hamlet," and you like plays, you know.

CHRIS. Yes, I like movie plays. (*Making her way towards door* L., *evidently frightened.*) But, I t'ink, I got some work to do.

(*Quick exit, but during the following scene between* NINA *and* MRS. BLAIR, *she every now and then peeks in door and then vanishes.*)

NINA. My make-up must be striking. Christina was apparently much impressed.

ALICE. It is perfect! You are an ideal Ophelia.

NINA. I don't think we will be disturbed. The Grandons are all out, and the girls.

ALICE (*goes to* C. *and looks off* L.). The bunch are playing tennis for dear life. (*Turns and looks off* R.) Oh, horrors! here comes Mrs. Blair. How unfortunate. How can we get rid of her?

NINA (*quietly*). I am glad she's coming. It's an opportunity I've been longing for to square accounts for her abuse of the Rector. Leave her to me, and unless I am very much mistaken, she'll leave this room in less than five minutes, and faster than she ever did before in her life.

ALICE. For pity's sake, don't be rough with her, Nina. It would displease the Rector terribly.

NINA. I don't propose to address one word to her. Just skip into the study and enjoy the fun.

ALICE (*going to door* R.). Do be careful, Nina. [*Exits.*

NINA. Just watch me.

(*Exits door* L., *leaving it half open.*)

(MRS. BLAIR *enters* C., *wearing ordinary summer clothes, but has on her hat one or two red feathers sticking straight up. She looks around as if in search of some one. Goes towards* L., *but stops with a jerk on hearing* NINA *outside reciting in tragic voice.*)

NINA (*off stage*). Infirm of purpose! Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead are but as pictures.

MRS. B. (*gasps*). Good land of Goshen; it's a crazy woman! (*Backing away.*)

NINA (*off stage*). If he do bleed I'll guild the faces of the grooms withal. (*Slowly enters, pointing, but not directly at* MRS. BLAIR.) For it must seem their guilt. (MRS. B., *backing away, overturns chair. Gives half-smothered shriek and darts behind screen, which must be just the height to allow the feathers on hat to appear over top of screen.*) Whence that knocking? How is it with me, when every noise appalls me? Will all great Neptune's ocean wash the blood clean from my hands? (*Coming over and pointing at screen.*) Shake not thy gory locks at me, thou canst not say I did it. (*Screen is seen to tremble and shake.*) I'll strike thee now, though 'tis against my conscience. (*Makes a stab at right side of screen. The feathers are seen to move in opposite direction. A groan is heard. Sinks on floor with her back partly to screen.*) Come hither, pretty dove. (*Business of taking imaginary child in her arms.*) And must you die before the break of day?

MRS. B. (*looking over top of screen*). Not if I can get out of this pesky room alive!

(*The feathers are seen to move in the direction of* C. *door.*)

NINA. But hark! The soldiers even now are at the door; they would crush out your young life! (*Feathers seem to move in opposite direction towards door* R.) No. They are there! (*Indicating door* R. *Feathers move in opposite direction.*) But I will foil them. You shall die by my hands. (*Makes a dash towards screen, then suddenly stops.*) No, I have blood enough upon my hands. Oh, will these little hands never be white? (*Retiring towards left entrance.*) Get thee to a nunnery. To a nunnery go and quickly, too. (*Slowly exits* L. *with arms raised.*) Farewell, farewell!

MRS. B. (*cautiously comes from behind screen*). I'll go to a nunnery or granary to get away from that crazy loon. Land-a-Goshen, what goings on!

[*Exits quickly* C., *then* R.

ALICE (*reënters from* R., *convulsed with laughter.* NINA *from* L.). Nina, you're a wonder! I was almost frightened myself.

NINA. And Mrs. Blair can register no protest. Did I address one single word to her? Haven't I a perfect right to rehearse my readings?

ALICE. Of course you have. Nina, I don't know but what you are better in tragedy than you are in comedy. Your bit from Macbeth was positively thrilling.

NINA. It seemed to be effective. Do you know, I believe I'll scratch one of my lighter numbers on the program and substitute a scene from Shakespeare. Let me see. How can I arrange it? Where's there a scrap of paper? (*They are sitting at table.*)

ALICE (*spies envelope in book, takes it out*). An old envelope that probably Murray dropped, and the doctor has used for a book-mark.

NINA. That will do all right. (*Picks up pencil from table.*) First my a-b-c number, light trifles from Eugene Fields. (*Writes on envelope.*)

ALICE. They are always lovely.

NINA. Then for my second number, I believe I'll be audacious enough to give the sleeping scene from Mac-

beth, or would the "Quality of Mercy" speech from "The Merchant of Venice," be better?

ALICE. Why not get up in both? Have the program read, selections from Shakespeare, and on the evening give the one that seems to fit your mood.

NINA. I believe I'll do just that.

ALICE. Then to appear later in the charming comedy rôle which Murray has written for you in the sketch. What an opportunity it gives you to display your skill and versatility.

NINA. Murray has done good work in that sketch, and how well he plays his part.

ALICE (*archly*). Have you ever told him so?

NINA (*with a shade of embarrassment*). No—I—well, wouldn't it seem as if I was encouraging him to make love to me?

ALICE (*smiling*). And would that be so very distasteful to you?

(*During the last speech or two,* NINA *in an abstracted way has been toying with envelope, and taken out the message paper.*)

NINA. I think Murray is a very nice boy, but ——

(*Smoothing out paper.*)

ALICE. I am certain he adores you, Nina. The sketch has given his secret away to me, and —— (NINA, *as she reads message, her face registers confusion, dismay.*) What is it, Nina? Has he written a confession to you?

NINA. No. What can this mean? It reads—like a confession—that might have come from me. But I never wrote it. And it is not in Murray's handwriting. Alice, what can it all mean? A message like this tucked away in one of Dr. Grandon's books. It's uncanny.

ALICE (*glances at message*). I think it was written, dear, by some one who could read hearts correctly.

NINA. I don't know.

(*Covers her face with her hands.*)

ALICE. Keep it, Nina, and see if this mysterious ally

of Master Cupid doesn't betray himself within the next few hours.

NINA. I am going to my room to take off these absurd clothes, and think. [*Exits* L.

(*A shout is heard from the bunch at tennis.* ALICE *goes to* C. *door, looking off* L.)

VERA (*is heard shouting*). Al-i-ce! The ice-cream man is here! Come and get a cone.

ALICE (*waving her hand*). All right, Vera, save me two. (*Laughing, runs off.*)

CHRIS. (*enters* L. *Goes over towards telephone, which is on stand against right wall. Shakes her head doubtfully*). I dunno. (*Takes down receiver, calls.*) Hello, dis is de rect'ry.—What number? Ah—Ah—I forgets. (*Hangs up receiver. Goes over to book, searches for paper, shakes her head.*) So! (*Continues her search on table.*) I dunno. (*Again goes to 'phone, takes down receiver.*) Hello! Dis is de rect'ry!—Number? I can't find de number.—Who I want to speak to?—Mr. Murray Kent. He ban up at a camp!—He don't say if his name is in de book, maybe.—My name?—I'm Christina.—T'ank you, I'm pretty well.—I ain't got no number.—No, I can't tell you de message. Mr. Lynn say nobody must hear what I 'phone.—Yes, dat's so.—It was a message—Miss Lee say, which she didn't say, but would have said if she'd said it. (*Angry.*) Don't get funny. I ain't a Battie, I'm a Swede.—Miss Lee say, which she didn't say, dat Mr. Murray was the nicest feller she knew, and could make love on a stretch.—Ring off? Maybe I better do dat. (*Hangs up receiver. Searches again. Trying to recall number.*) 3-9-7—No.—9-37—Sure! (*Takes down receiver.*) Hello! Dis is de rect'ry. I t'ink of dat number now. 9-3-7-R. Get him quick, and tell him dat—a girl's house is on fire. No, I mean —— Hello! Now da ring off! (*Hangs up. Shrugs.*) I dunno.

(*Takes a piece of gum and starts towards door* L. *Turns on hearing* DR. GRANDON'S *voice off* C.)

DR. G. It is really most extraordinary, most extraordinary!

MARY (*they appear at back*). Most extraordinary. (*They stand looking off towards tennis court.*) All the young people appear to be accounted for.

MARTHA (*also appears*). Yes, all except Miss Lee.

DR. G. Mrs. Blair must have seen some one. It could not have been an hallucination. (*Turns.*) Ah, there's Christina, perhaps she can enlighten us.

MARTHA (*almost a groan*). Christina! I fear the worst.

DR. G. Christina, did you see Mrs. Blair when she called here a few minutes ago?

CHRIS. Yes, Mister Grandon, I seen her, but, no, I didn't say nothings to her. I keep out of sight.

DR. G. Who did speak to her, and who was in sight? Mrs. Blair tells us that she came here and a crazy woman threatened to murder her.

CHRIS. I dunno. Maybe she mean Miss Lee.

MARY. Miss Lee, threaten murder?

CHRIS. She scare me when I first seen her. She was all dressed up in a nightgown, and her hair flying; she look fierce.

MARTHA. She may have been wearing a costume for their theatricals.

CHRIS. Yes. I t'ink so. When Missie Blair came, Miss Lee was out there in the hall, saying dat somebody was firm on a purpose, and that she wanted daggers.

DR. G. A light begins to dawn on me. Miss Lee was doubtless rehearsing a scene from Macbeth. You recall the lines, Mary, "Infirm of purpose. Give me the daggers"?

MARY. Yes, of course. But how unfortunate that Mrs. Blair should meet with a second indignity while calling here. Ah, what did Mrs. Blair say, or do, Christina?

CHRIS. When Miss Lee come into the room here saying dat all de naptha in the ocean could not wash the bleed from her hands, Misses Blair she yells, kicks over a chair and runs behind dat screen.

MARY. How unfortunate. How frightened the poor woman must have been.

CHRIS. I t'ink so, for I seen de screen shake.

MARY. Miss Lee must have known that there was some one behind the screen.

CHRIS. I dunno. Oh, Miss Lee went on fierce. She say some one had stolen her child, and dat soldiers was coming in dere. (*Pointing to door* C.) Den Misses Blair she skip over there. (*Points to* R.)

MARTHA. How could you tell she skipped over there, if she was behind the screen?

CHRIS. The fedders on her hat stick over de top.

MARTHA. How funny it must have looked.

CHRIS. You ought to have seen it! The fedders going dis way, and dat. (*Appropriate gestures.*)

(MARTHA *laughs.*)

MARY. Martha, how can you! Mrs. Blair will never forgive this indignity.

DR. G. Strange. Miss Lee did not realize she had an audience in hiding?

MARTHA. I have not the slightest doubt but that she did fully. Stephen dear, do you recall my telling you that I thought probably the young people would make their presence felt before they were through with Mrs. Blair?

DR. G. Yes, I believe you did suggest that possibly ——

MARTHA. And how can Miss Lee be taken to task for rehearsing a scene that she is to give for your favorite mission?

MARY. Perhaps it may all be satisfactorily explained to Mrs. Blair.

MARTHA. Bother Mrs. Blair! If she hadn't been an arrant coward and goose, she wouldn't have fled to cover like a frightened child. How did this nightmare end, Christina?

CHRIS. Miss Lee she raise her arms so! (*Gesture.*) and say: "Get thee to a tannery for a fare the well," and quick as she come out in the hall Misses Blair beat it.

DR. G. It must have all been quite exciting. Well, now I hope quiet and peace will be restored. (*Young people heard talking excitedly outside. "What are the*

bells ringing for?" "Is it a celebration?" "The procession is coming this way." "Ray will find out," etc., etc. TACKS, VERA, SYLVIA, CECILY *and* ALICE *come running on at back.*) What is the excitement? Have you heard why the bells are ringing?

TACKS. Not yet, Doctor, but we shall know soon.

VERA. There appears to be some sort of a celebration going on in the village.

CECILY. It looks as if it might be a parade.

SYL. At the first tap of the bell Lynn rushed down the road like mad.

DR. G. How extraordinary!

VERA. When the procession came in sight, around the bend in the road, we saw Lynn talking to the head marshal as if he was trying to explain something. He was gesticulating wildly.

CECILY. And when Ray saw that Lynn might be involved in the excitement, he started pell-mell in the direction of Lynn.

SYL. It reminds one of the old nursery rhyme: the butcher began to kill the ox, that tossed the dog, that worried the cat ——

MARTHA (*grimly*). Perhaps it may be the police force coming "en masse" to capture Mrs. Blair's lunatic lady.

(ALICE *and* TACKS *have been looking off.*)

TACKS. Here comes Ray now, and laughing like an idiot. I guess the commotion cannot be anything very serious.

ALICE. Oh, that's no indication. Ray would laugh if a riot was imminent.

TACKS. Here is the laughing youth; let him speak for himself.

(RAY *runs on, laughing.*)

ALICE. We—what is it? Speak.

VERA. Is it a wake or a wedding?

RAY. Neither, but a suggestion of both. The funni-

est stunt you ever heard of! Hatched up by Lynn, assisted by Christina.

ALL. Christina?

RAY (*trying to restrain his laughter*). From the brief explanation Lynn was able to give me, it seems he planned to pose as a mysterious cupid. He composed a touching message, supposed to express the sentiment a certain young woman, he refused to disclose who, entertained for Murray Kent, and persuaded Christina to 'phone this heart throb to Murray, but she must have got mixed on the number, for instead of smearing the wires out to camp with loves and kisses she called up the Fire Department! For pulling funny stunts Christina has got Charlie Chaplin beat forty different ways!

(*Curtain falls during a chorus of laughter.*)

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*The same as in* ACTS I *and* II. *The evening of the lawn party. If possible the room in subdued light through colored shades. Chinese lanterns seen at back. The room in this act is used as an impromptu greenroom, where the performers meet between their numbers. The study and rooms off* L. *as dressing rooms. It would be effective if the girls all wore fancy costumes, such as a French peasant, a Dutch girl, Little Bo-peep, a colonial maid, or any attractive dress according to taste. The young men might do the same.* LYNN *in a clown suit, as he is supposed to give a funny monologue. The* GRANDONS *dressed fitting the occasion.* CHRISTINA *in neat white dress with apron and maid's cap.*

(*As curtain rises* TACKS, *in cavalier costume, standing at* C. *door as if on guard, looking off.* DR. GRANDON *and* MARY *appear at back; they are about to enter.* TACKS *bars their way.*)

TACKS (*in feigned gruff voice*). Are you among the company of royal players?

DR. G. (*entering into the spirit of the fun*). No, Sir Knight. I am the Prime Minister of the King of Never-never Land.

TACKS. And the lady, me lord?

DR. G. Is the Princess of Perpetual Sunshine.

TACKS (*bowing low*). You are welcome, me lord and lady. (*Steps aside for them to enter. All burst into laughter.* TACKS, *in natural voice.*) There is quite a crowd out there, isn't there, Doctor?

DR. G. Yes, indeed; I'm amazed. I have never seen anything like it during my rectorship here at Heatherdale.

MARY. It must be the fame of your clever company which has attracted them, Sir Knight.

TACKS (*grinning*). Perhaps Mrs. Blair has been a good press agent without realizing it?

DR. G. (*smiling*). Perhaps she has.

TACKS. And maybe Christina has done her share by spreading reports about the man who can take off his face? Poor Lynn! Well, at any rate, I think he and Murray have arranged a pretty good program. I am sorry I was not able to do more, but "stunts" are not just in my line.

MARY. You are too modest, Mr. Mulford. I am sure the mandolin club's opening number pleased the audience tremendously.

TACKS. They did appear to like it. But it was Cecily who was doing the real artistic work.

DR. G. But why are you not over with your friends, enjoying the fun?

TACKS (*slightly embarrassed*). Ah — well — Vera thought somebody better remain here on guard, for you see the girls' dresses and jewelery are here, and ——

DR. G. (*smiling*). Ah, yes, I see. When Venus speaks, even football warriors, like the knights of old, must obey.

MARY (*bantering tone*). Poor Sir Knight! While you are here keeping your faithful vigil, probably capricious Venus is sauntering in the moonlight scattering her smiles in wanton gaiety.

TACKS (*with quizzical smile*). Perhaps.

DR. G. I didn't happen to see Miss Vera out on the grounds, did you, Mary? But there is such a crowd it is not surprising.

TACKS. Oh, I don't mind Mrs. Grandon. Vera likes all this society flirtation fuss better than I do. So I ——

VERA (*pops out of door* R.). Tacks, what on earth did Nina do with my eyebrow pencil? (*Seeing the* GRANDONS.) Oh!

DR. G. (*taking hold of* MARY'S *arm*). Hem! My dear, I am afraid our friends will be missing us.

(*They hurry out of sight, quietly laughing.*)

VERA (*provoked*). I thought you were to keep every one but our bunch away while I was dressing?

TACKS (*looks her up and down, grinning*). You appear to be dressed. And I couldn't very well keep the rector out of his own house.

VERA. Of course you couldn't, Tacks; I am afraid I'm cross.

TACKS (*awkwardly*). No, you are not, Vera. I don't believe you could be.

VERA (*demurely*). Oh, yes, I can be, Tacks. (*They are sitting fairly close together.*) You see, you have only known me not quite two weeks yet.

TACKS. But that has been long enough to show me that—that you are a thoroughbred, a—a peach of a thoroughbred.

VERA. You are awfully good to say so, Tacks. I can't see what makes you think so. (*Sighs.*) I can neither dance like Sylvia ——

TACKS. Oh, Sylvia is all right, of course. I know Lynn thinks so. But dancing is her long suit, and a fellow wouldn't want a girl who was dancing all the time.

VERA. And then there's Nina, who acts and recites so beautifully.

TACKS. I like Nina, but that's just it; she acts so well a feller couldn't tell when she was in earnest or not.

VERA. I know you must admire Cecily; she plays the mandolin so delightfully, and that's your favorite instrument, you know.

TACKS. Oh, the mandolin is just a pleasing toy. I like the guitar much better. Cecily is a mighty nice little kid, but I like a girl with more "pep" about her, fond of sports, that can wallop a ball.

VERA (*laughing*). Or a highwayman's head. (*Then seriously.*) Do you know, Tacks, I can never forgive myself for hitting you as I did.

TACKS. And you have kept on hitting me every day since, only in a different way.

VERA. If I wasn't so horribly sorry, I wouldn't allow you to be talking to me as you are this evening.

TACKS. I haven't said half what I want to say, Vera. (*About to take her hand.* CHRISTINA *enters* C. TACKS, *seeing her.*) Well, what do you want?

CHRIS. Mr. Lynn say how you should better come out and see the show.

TACKS. What business is it of Mr. Lynn's where I am? (*Annoyed.*) Why didn't you stay out and see it yourself?

CHRIS. Mr. Lynn he treat me to ice-cream to come in here.

TACKS. Oh, he did? Well, here's a dollar for you to buy ice-cream to stay out. (*Hands bill.*)

CHRIS. (*takes money*). I t'ink I stay out. [*Exit.*

TACKS. I suppose Lynn thinks he's clever. Huh. The bull he made of getting the Fire Department here, or being responsible for it, ought to hold him for a while. I guess he wouldn't like it if I hired an ape to break him up when he was talking with his best girl.

(*Sounds of applause are heard in the distance.*)

VERA (*crosses to* C. *door*). But I haven't said I would be your best girl—yet.

TACKS. But you will, won't you, Vera?

VERA (*coquetting*). Well, I really hardly know what to say. I think you will agree, Tacks, that I seldom allow myself to become flustered, but on an occasion like this ——

TACKS. Now you are trying to mimic Mrs. Grandon. I believe you would guy your own grandmother.

(*They start towards* C., VERA *laughing. They meet* LYNN *and* SYLVIA; *she is carrying a box of candy.*)

LYNN. Hello! What are you spooners doing here? Why weren't you out to hear Nina capture the crowd with her Shakespeare act?

TACKS (*indignant*). And leave the house wide open, for any one to come in and help themselves?

SYL. Lynn and I will relieve you now; he to get into his comics, and I into my dancing clothes.

(*She is at door* L.)

VERA. A lot of watching you will be able to do, each in your dressing rooms.

LYNN. Don't you worry about us.

[LYNN *exits* R. SYLVIA *exits* L.

VERA. At any rate, they will be the width of the room apart.

TACKS. They are now. But just watch me give Christina another dollar, this time for her to come in.

[*They exit,* C.

(SYLVIA *and* LYNN *open doors and look out.*)

SYL. It looked as if we dropped in on a rather interesting tête-à-tête. The air seems to be charged with romance to-night. (*They come down to front* C. *of stage.*)

LYNN. Yes, it does. What with moonlight, music and lovely girls ——

SYL. And lovely candy. (*Opens box and takes a chocolate.*) How I shall enjoy it.

LYNN. I might quote that old saw about giving sweets to the sweets.

SYL. Lynn, you are becoming sentimental.

LYNN. And you the inspiration to incite sentiment, ardor, love!

(*About to put his arm around her when* MRS. BLAIR'S *voice is heard off* C.)

MRS. B. I'll telephone right off. I never see nothin' to beat it.

(LYNN *and* SYLVIA *break away. She leaves the box of candy on table.*)

SYL. That Nemesis, Mrs. Blair!

(*Rushes out door* L. LYNN *starts for door* R., *but* MRS. BLAIR, *entering, spies him.*)

MRS. B. (*gives half scream*). Oh, Mr. Lockwood, you give me quite a turn. I'm as nervous as a witch to-night. What with lookin' after this thing and that, I'm fit to be tied.

LYNN (*with quiet sarcasm*). Yes, Mrs. Blair, I no-

ticed you have been quite a busybody all the evening, so much to attend to.

MRS. B. And now I've got to telephone Simeon to send over a wash tub.

LYNN. Ah, ah, is some one going to take a bath?

MRS. B. No, it's for lemonade. They've drank one wash boiler full already. It's disappearin' like pourin' water down a sink. (*Picks up receiver.*) Give me 2-2-4-J. (*Addressing* LYNN.) I never see such a thirsty crowd in my life. (*In 'phone.*) Can't get no answer? Huh, I'll bet a dollar that Simeon has fell asleep in his chair.

LYNN. Does he frequently indulge in—a siesta?

MRS. B. Yes, Esther, our little girl, takes after him. I believe she'd go to sleep standin' up. (*In 'phone.*) Oh, is that you, Simeon? This is Selina talkin'.—I most generally be?—Now don't try and be smart, but go right out in the shed, empty them beans out of the big blue wash tub and bring it right over to the grounds. No, not on your back, in a wheelbarrow.—Never mind puttin' on your shoes, come right over in your slippers, it's only a step. Get a move on you. (*Hangs up.*) We've never had nothin' like this in Heatherdale, not in my time. Such a crowd, and all free spenders.

LYNN. Well, that's certainly very gratifying.

MRS. B. And you young people have helped quite a little.

LYNN. Oh, nothing to speak of, only the entertainment.

MRS. B. Oh, yes, of course. But we women furnished the refreshments. Land-a-Goshen, the ice-cream is goin' like hot cakes.

LYNN. And probably "hot dogs" would have gone like ice-cream.

MRS. B. Like enough. How pretty that Miss Lee can recite. She must have been practicing a piece when I came in the other day, got scared and must have made a fool of myself. Maybe you heard about it?

LYNN. I believe I did hear the doctor mention that you called, yet no hint but that you appeared quite natural.

MRS. B. Well, I mustn't be gabbin' here, or my committee will be sendin' the constable to hunt me up, and Simeon won't know what to do with that wash tub.

(*Bustles out* C., *then* L. *Enter* ALICE, C., *from* R.)

ALICE. Where is Sylvia? It is almost time for her number, and you come next but one after that.

LYNN. Is that right? And I haven't done a thing about my make-up. Sylvia is in there dressing. (*Points* L.) And I think Nina just came in too.

ALICE. I'll go in and help them. [*Exits* L. LYNN R.

MARTHA (*enters hurriedly, calling*). Mrs. Blair! Mrs. Blair!

LYNN (*opening door, looking out*). Mrs. Blair left here a moment ago.

MARTHA. She is wanted at the lemonade stand right away. What on earth was she doing in here?

LYNN. She was calling up a wash tub.

MARTHA. Calling up a wash tub? What new freak has seized the woman now?

LYNN. She was actually talking to some one, whom she called Simeon, to bring over a wash tub, whoever Simeon may be.

MARTHA. He's her husband. Did she get him? He frequently drops asleep.

LYNN. She knows it. She's on to Simeon all right. She handed him quite a line of flossie talk.

MARTHA. Oh, mercy! I'll have to go and head him off. He's liable to come to the party in his overalls.

LYNN. She suggested that he come over in his slippers.

MARTHA. Oh, horrors! I must also find Christina and rescue her from sudden death. She is simply gorging herself with ice-cream. (CHRISTINA *appears at back.*) Oh, there you are, Christina; I was going to look you up to say that too much ice-cream and sweets are bad for any one. So do be careful.

CHRIS. Yes, Miss Martha, but I feel fine! Mr. Tacks tell me I must eat a dollar's worth of ice-cream, and

(*Taking coins from pocket and counting them.*) and I only got fifteen cents' worth left.

MARTHA. What with cake, lemonade, and peanuts, (*Shakes her head.*) you must have the capacity of a boa-constrictor. (*Going.*) I'll have my medicine chest in readiness. Now do be careful. [*Exits* C.

CHRIS. Yes, Miss Martha.

(*Watches her out, turns and discovers box of candy. Looks cautiously about. Takes screen from* R. C. *and places it so she is hidden from* C. *door, but can be plainly seen by audience. She places a chair at right of screen, sits, with box of chocolates in her lap and begins leisurely to eat them.* CECILY *and* RAY *saunter in at* C.)

RAY. I have hardly had a moment to speak to you alone this evening, Cecily.

CECILY. Of course you haven't. I was either playing or watching the show.

RAY. But we are alone now, and it may be for the last time in I don't know how long. (*Sighs.*) For our party breaks up to-morrow.

CECILY. And what a lovely time we have had, thanks to Alice, the Grandons—and you.

RAY. I am glad that you included me, Cecily. Have I made you happy?

CECILY. Why, of course you have. You have been so kind and attentive to your guests, and always so jolly.

RAY. So have Tacks and Lynn and Murray been kind and jolly, but each one of them has found a charming girl, who—cares for him, and perhaps become engaged to her. You don't know, Cecily, how fond I have become—of you.

CECILY (*looks at him archly for an instant*). To how many girls have you said that very thing, Ray, a dozen?

RAY (*protesting*). No! I——

CECILY (*laughing*). Eleven, then; ten——

RAY. Cecily, you are unkind. One would think we were only playing at the game of twelve little, eleven little, ten little Indians. It's a serious matter with me.

(CHRISTINA *gives a deep sigh.*)

CECILY (*startled*). What was that? I thought I heard some one.

RAY. You know every one is out on the grounds. It was just an excuse to change the subject.

CECILY. No, it was not. (*A slight pause; she toys with the ribbons on her gown or hat.*) It is probably my mandolin you like, Ray. It's the music that has gone to your head.

RAY. And your glances to my heart. (LYNN *quietly opens door* R., *discloses himself to audience made up as a clown.*) Of course I realize we are still pretty young, but you remember what Tom Moore wrote: "There's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream." You can just whisper your answer, Cecily.

(CHRISTINA *glances up and sees* LYNN, *releases a yell. Starts up; nearly knocks screen over in her mad attempt to escape.* CECILY *screams.*)

LYNN. I had no idea of promoting a riot, old man. Honestly, I thought no one was here!

RAY (*angry, to* CHRISTINA). Say! Were you hiding behind that screen all the time listening?

CHRIS. No. I wasn't listening—much. I just heard you say: "There is nothing half so sweet in life as love's ice-cream." Then I look up and see that, (*Pointing to* LYNN.) and . . . it almost . . . take away my breath.

LYNN. Yes, you appeared to lose control of your voice. (*Crosses to* L.) You'll have to settle your troubles, old man; I'll be late for my turn. (*Knocks at door* L.) Is Sylvia ready?

ALICE. Yes, Sylvia is all ready to go on. You both better go out this way, it's shorter.

LYNN. All right. (NINA *enters from* L., *dressed like a fashionable up-to-date city girl.*) Gee! Nina, your get-up is great. If you looked any more stunning you'd have to charge admission.

NINA. Thank you, Lynn. (*Laughing.*)

LYNN. Come on, Sylvia, now for the star act! Can't you lend me a cloak, or something, to put over this rig?

SYLVIA (*speaking from room*). Perhaps this will do.

LYNN. Just the thing. (*Skips into room.*)

CECILY. Come, Ray, we must see their act.

RAY (*a little grouchy*). All right. (*Looking back at* CHRISTINA.) You're an abnormal frost.

[*They exeunt* C. *door.*

ALICE (*kindly*). Why don't you go out and see the entertainment, Christina, and get some of the refreshments? Mr. Lynn and Miss Lee are to give an awfully funny show.

CHRIS. Miss Martha say I must be careful ——

ALICE. Not to leave the house, I suppose. Well, I'm going to be here for a little while. (*To* NINA.) Probably no one will offer to treat her. See here, Christina, here's a half dollar, go and get yourself some ice-cream and cake.

CHRIS. But Miss Martha say ——

ALICE. You tell Miss Martha I told you to go. That will be all right. (*Hands coin.*)

CHRIS. T'ank you, Miss Huntings, (*Meekly.*) I might take a little cream. [*Exit.*

ALICE (*seated* R.). I have scarcely seen Murray all evening, have you?

NINA (*at* L.). Just for a few minutes. He is purposely keeping out of sight.

ALICE. From you?

NINA. Oh, no. He has an almost freakish aversion to mingling with an audience before he appears on the stage. A little crotchety perhaps, but I have read of many real actors who felt the same way.

ALICE. But where is he hiding?

NINA. Out in the garage, all made up and ready. You know the garage almost opens onto our impromptu stage.

ALICE. Nina, what have you ever done with that mysterious paper we found in one of the doctor's books?

NINA. I have it here in my bag; I feel safer with it

by me. Cupid's mysterious ally, as you termed him, has not yet betrayed himself?

ALICE. No. Let me have it, will you, please? I want to read it again.

NINA. You will promise not to allow Murray to see it?

ALICE. Of course. On my honor, I won't.

NINA (*opens little wrist bag and hands* ALICE *paper*). Do you think you can discover the writer?

ALICE. I am going to try.

MARY (*appears at back*). Pardon me for disturbing you, but I am looking for my sister Martha, and I didn't know but that she might have dropped in here. She is wanted at once over at the flower stand. No one appears to know the price of anything. I cannot understand why she is not at her post.

ALICE. She has not been in here, Mrs. Grandon.

MARY It really is so annoying. I wanted so much to hear Mr. Lynn tell his funny stories. I heard the audience laughing immoderately. If you do see her, will you please tell her to join me at once at the flower booth?

ALICE. Yes, indeed, Mrs. Grandon. (*Rises.*) Can't I help you look for her?

MARY. Oh, no, I thank you. (*Going up* C.) I am expecting a great treat in seeing you, Miss Nina, in the little play. I am sure it will be bright and entertaining.

NINA. I hope we don't disappoint you, Mrs. Grandon.

MARY. I am sure you will not. [*Exits* C., *then* R.

ALICE (*again taking up paper*). By mild deception, I have managed to get a sample of all the boys' handwriting, and none of them is just like this. Lynn's comes the nearest.

NINA. Wasn't it Lynn who Ray said persuaded Christina to 'phone a message to Murray, which she bungled, and called up the Fire Department?

ALICE. Yes, of course it was. How stupid in me.

DR. G. (*appears at back*). Pardon me, but is Mrs. Grandon here?

ALICE. No, Doctor. But she was here not three minutes ago. She was looking for Miss Martha.

DR. G. How unfortunate. Mrs. Hunting wishes to

consult with her about repeating this fête to-morrow evening. I hope they do, for I really have had no opportunity to see half the clever things you young people have been doing, my time has been so fully occupied (*Laughing.*) hunting up vanishing women. Doubtless I will find her. [*Exits* C., *then* L.

ALICE (*the girls exchange smiles. Again consulting paper*). It would be a rather delicate matter to accuse Lynn openly of inventing this message, for you see we would have to show it to him, and there comes in the embarrassing part.

NINA. No, I wouldn't want you to do that. Let's drop the affair for the present, at least till I am through with my performance. This talk is getting on my nerves.

ALICE. Naturally. It was stupid in me to bring the matter up just as you are about to appear in a new rôle.

MARTHA (*enters hurriedly, looks about*). And he doesn't appear to be here.

ALICE. Who are you looking for, Miss Martha?

MARTHA (*evidently nettled*). My brother, the rector. They want him to make a little speech of thanks to our patrons. Don't dare to say he has just left here, and was inquiring for Mary. That's what I have been told at every tent, booth, and stand for the past ten minutes.

ALICE (*laughing*). I am afraid I'll have to, for that is precisely what has happened.

MARTHA. Well, I am not going to continue running around in a circle a moment longer. Let the committee find him. I am going to see at least one number on the program. [*Exits* C., *then* L.

NINA (*the girls convulsed with laughter*). A revival of the old game of hares and hounds!

ALICE. In an ecclesiastical setting. And each one of them peeved because they were prevented from seeing the show!

LYNN (*enters running*). All ready, Nina, for the sketch; Murray is waiting.

NINA. All right, tell him I'll be there directly.

(*Going to* C.)

ALICE. How did your number go?

LYNN (*carelessly*). Oh, I made them laugh, so I guess I got by.

ALICE (*to* NINA). Good luck, dear. I'll be watching. And make your acceptance of the country boy so realistic that Murray will understand.

NINA. Perhaps.

(*Smiling, runs off* C. LYNN *about to follow her.*)

ALICE. Just one moment, Lynn, I want you to answer me a question. And honestly.

LYNN. All right, shoot.

ALICE. You wrote this fake confession (*Showing paper.*) and it's the message Christina bungled in sending the other day, isn't it?

LYNN. Yes. How on earth did you come by it? Did you find it in the book?

ALICE. Yes. But Nina was the first to read it. She was looking for a scrap of paper to scribble on.

LYNN. What did she say?

ALICE. She hardly knew what to say. We were both mystified. How came you to do it? It seems to me it bordered on extremely poor taste.

LYNN. I don't blame you a bit for thinking so. It looks that way to me now. But my intentions were good, and the idea was suggested to me by a twist in one of Shakespeare's plays.

ALICE. Huh! Shakespeare never perpetrated any absurdity so outrageous as this.

LYNN. He never originated any plots. He stole all his.

ALICE. We won't argue that point. Which of his plays suggested the idea to you?

LYNN. "Much Ado About Nothing." Don't you remember how Leonato, Claudio, Hero and Ursula hatched up a scheme of having Beatrice and Benedict overhear their conversation, and how the trick was the means of bringing the lovers together?

ALICE. Perfectly.

LYNN. Well, it occurred to me that if Christina telephoned Murray part of a conversation she had sup-

posedly overheard between—well, say you and Nina; and he, knowing her consistent stupidity and faculty for blurting out the truth at the most unfortunate time, all that would lend a touch of probability to her disclosure. But you drift in, purloin the camp's number and the message, Christina rings up the Fire Department, and the beans are spilled. But I still believe the scheme was a good one.

ALICE. As you explain it, it does sound plausible. Humph. What other suggestion can we borrow from Shakespeare? We can't tack this paper up on a tree, as Orlando did in his wooing of Rosalind.

LYNN. No. And Nina would shrink from dressing up in Viola's togs and doing a John Alden stunt.

ALICE. Yes, I suppose she would. (*Impatiently.*) Oh, bother their love affairs, I have wasted enough time thinking up plans. If Murray persists in being such a bashful bumpkin he deserves to lose Nina.

LYNN. Precisely. Shakespeare would not only endorse your self-determination, but has given a hint at the only logical solution.

ALICE (*laughing*). How do you know?

LYNN. I can quote two statements of his to prove it. First: "If ladies be but young and fair, they have the gift to know it," and we will all admit that Nina is young and fair.

ALICE. Most emphatically.

LYNN. Now list to the profundity of my chain of reasoning, and this is the clincher: "Beauty itself doth of itself persuade the eyes of men *without* an orator." (*Flourishes his hands.*) Do you get me? I knew it was up to Shakespeare in some way to straighten out this difficulty. And now let's hie to the ring side, I mean stage side, and watch Beauty do the persuading. (*Goes to* L.)

ALICE. Lynn, you are a genius—at borrowing another's wit. (*Burlesque gesture.*) Lead on, Macduff! I'll follow thee. [*They exeunt* L.

VERA (*speaking as she and* TACKS *enter* C.). Tacks, you are the most impatient man. Trying to make a base hit every minute.

TACKS. And you striking me out every time I come to bat.

VERA. Tacks dear, you will learn, in time, that women have such a bewildering assortment of curves at their command that few men have ever been able to solve them.

TACKS. Well, some men must, or there wouldn't be any marriages.

VERA. Men don't really solve them, Tacks. Some pitchers either throw a straight ball, easy to hit; others, through pity, just toss them over; and some, I am afraid, are poor sports and sell out, but they lose the respect of every honest player.

TACKS. Gee! It's a more complicated game than I thought. (*Slight pause.*) Well, Vera, you are too fine a sport to ever sell out. I don't want pity and have you toss them over, just throw a good straight ball and I'll do my best to knock a homer—for both of us.

VERA (*goes to back, looking off. Turns and comes down near* TACKS). I'll ease up on my pitching, and admit I like you tremendously. But Lynn and Sylvia are coming this way; we don't want them to have the laugh on us again. Let's go into the study and see if we can't frame up some kind of a tentative contract, with a special clause that at any time either of us can be released, if we find it better and wiser to do so, before signing up for life.

(*She offers her hand, which he takes. They cross to door* R.)

TACKS (*radiantly*). Vera, you're a peach of a thoroughbred. [*They exit.*

LYNN (*enters; looks cautiously about. Beckons to* SYLVIA, *who enters*). It's all right. I thought I saw Tacks and Vera come in this way; they must have taken the path to the right. At any rate, they have disappeared.

SYL. (*who has been searching on table*). Yes, and so has my lovely box of candy!

LYNN. Where did you leave it?

SYL. Right here on the table.

LYNN (*laughing*). I'll bet a hat that Christina pinched it. (*Goes over by screen and finds remnants of box and contents.*) Sure she did!

SYL. Well, of all the impudence. And after my giving her a dollar to buy sweets.

LYNN. So did I. Gee, she would be an expensive girl to take to the beaches. Never mind, I'll buy you another box as soon as we get out on the grounds.

SYL. I don't see why we wanted to come in. I was wild to see the end of the sketch.

LYNN. You know how it ends. You saw it at rehearsal last night. The girl accepts the rustic, and they are supposed to live happily ever after. Hang the happy endings in plays. (*Coming over and sitting by* SYLVIA.) Sylvia, we dance so perfectly together on the stage, why can't we become partners—for always?

(*He puts his arm around her; she pushes it away.*)

SYL. See here, Lynn, this have and to hold business only occurs in the marriage service.

LYNN (*replaces his arm*). Yes, I know, but isn't the prospective bridegroom entitled to a little practice?

SYL. You seem quite at home in the art. And I object to being practiced on. (*Rises and goes up to* C.) We will have to vacate in favor of Ray and Cecily anyway. (*Laughing.*) I wonder if this old room at the rectory was ever converted into a spooning bower before?

LYNN. I don't know. (*Crosses to* L.) Let's go in here and watch their performance.

SYL. (*reluctantly joins him*). I don't like to do that. It would seem a little indecent, wouldn't it?

LYNN. Oh, I don't know, just for a minute. Haven't they chased us out?

SYL. Well, perhaps, just for a minute.

[*They exeunt* L., *leaving the door ajar.*

CECILY (RAY *and* CECILY *appear at back*). How prettily it all ended, and how naturally they acted.

RAY. Of course they did, for it wasn't acting at all. They both meant it. And couldn't you see how the audi-

ence approved of the girl's accepting him? All the world loves a lover, Cecily, all, it would seem, but you.

CECILY. Oh, I always sympathize with lovers—on the stage.

RAY. And I want you to in real life. (*Goes up* R. C., *and after assuring himself that there is no one behind screen, places it so it forms a three-sided box. Places two chairs inside.*) Now, Cecily, for a very last little talk. (*A little reluctantly she sits in box.* RAY *beside her.*) You have promised to write me, and that is about as far as we got.

CECILY. Yes, I will write to you occasionally.

RAY. And let me call and see you?

CECILY. Yes, do, whenever you are in the city.

RAY. And you won't consent to even just a pretend engagement?

(LYNN *and* SYLVIA *appear at door* L. *An instant later* TACKS *and* VERA *at door* R. VERA *signals to* SYLVIA, *puts her finger to lips and points to box.* LYNN *and* SYLVIA *nod, and during the following conversation all steal up stealthily, till they stand behind screen looking down at* RAY *and* CECILY.)

CECILY. Ray, I actually believe the moonlight, the music, and the closing scene in the play, have turned your head.

RAY. The moonlight and music have nothing to do with it. As I told you not an hour ago, it is you, your own fascinating self, that has bewitched me. You do care for me, don't you, Cecily? We are all alone. Answer me; is it yes or no?

(*The young people above have been exchanging glances.* LYNN *waves his hand, one, two; at three they all shout No! They all burst into laughter, even* RAY *is forced to join.*)

CECILY (*at* R.). Their word is not final, Ray!

RAY (*eagerly*). Then your answer is ——?

CECILY. Yes. I will write to you occasionally.

(*Laughing.*)

RAY (*spreads out his hands*). Stung!

(CECILY *and* RAY *down* R., TACKS *and* VERA *up* R. C., LYNN *and* SYLVIA *down* L.)

VERA. Don't you care, Ray. I can tell Cecily means yes in her heart all the time.

TACKS. How can you tell that?

VERA. By the dimples in her chin. A girl with dimples always means yes when she says no. They go with a certain curve she pitches.

(TACKS *looks in* VERA'S *face searchingly.*)

TACKS (*shakes his head*). It's a mighty complicated game. It's got football signals beat a mile.

LYNN. Well, I want to tell the world that we have had one splendid grand time here at Heatherdale!

TACKS. And that Doctor and Mrs. Grandon are both eighteen karat gold.

SYL. And Miss Martha?

LYNN. Oh, she's platinum. A little harder to melt, but pure metal to the core.

CECILY. And how about Alice and Ray? (*Smiling.*) We are indebted to them for everything.

LYNN. Alice is the solitaire diamond, in whose sparkling rays—(*Indicating* RAY.) that includes you, we have all been scintillating for the past two weeks. (*To* SYLVIA.) Say, that's pretty good. I believe I'll take up literature.

DR. G. (*as guests pass at back.* DR. GRANDON *shaking hands with them*). "Yes, it was all delightful." "Yes, indeed, a great success." "Good-night, so glad you could come." (*He enters.*) Well, my dear friends, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your kindness in giving us this delightful entertainment.

LYNN. Dr. Grandon, if we should give you a concert every night for a week it would be but meager compen-

sation for the magnificent hospitality that you have extended to us. (*Bowing. Then turning to* SYLVIA.) Say, I grow better every minute!

VERA. Yes, Doctor, that's just the way we all feel.

TACKS. And then some.

DR. G. (*smiling*). Well, really, I am afraid you overrate our part.

(MRS. GRANDON *and* NINA *appear at back.*)

LYNN. There's Nina! Only an innate delicacy prevents me from bursting out into "Here comes the bride"!

(ALICE *and* MURRAY *appear smiling and talking.*)

MARY. It was dear in you, Miss Nina, selecting me as the first one to offer you and Mr. Kent congratulations.

MUR. It was the only proper thing, Mrs. Grandon, for Nina to do. For if you had not been so gracious as to receive us here—Ah ——

LYNN (*in* MURRAY'S *hesitating tones*). I should have been obliged to remain a bachelor all my life.

DR. G. I am not so sure about that, Mr. Kent. I was impressed with a note of deep sincerity by the way you spoke the closing lines in your charming little play.

(MARTHA *enters.*)

MARY. Come, Martha, and add your good wishes. Our young friends here, The Rube and the Daisy, have decided to continue their love-making through, I trust, many, many happy years.

MARTHA. I am sure they will. (*Shakes hands with them.*) Even an old spinster never tires watching and smiling at the antics of Dan Cupid.

MUR. Thank you, Miss Martha.

CECILY. Of course Dr. Grandon will perform the ceremony.

DR. G. (*smiling*). Well, I should be proud and happy to do so.

LYNN. Dr. Grandon, I don't wish to appear at all

flippant, but is there any special fee, regarded as being most fitting, when you conduct a triple wedding? For Sylvia and I, and I fancy Tacks and Vera, with a near possibility of Cecily and Ray ——

MARTHA. Mary, have we been conducting a matrimonial bureau unawares?

MARY (*laughing*). It would almost seem like it.

DR. G. Well, my good friends, I truly regret that you are all leaving to-morrow. You have made us all very happy. (*Chuckles.*) Mr. Hunting prophesied that we would find you an inspiring bunch of fun, and you have been all that. I never had the gift of making fun myself, but it is a splendid tonic. As my dear brother Thaddeus used to say:

"A bit of fun, and a good hearty laugh,
Will lighten your burden at least one-half."

ALICE. In my opinion, the arch fun-maker has been Christina.

DR. G. I don't know but that that is so. Ah, where is Christina?

TACKS (*looking off*). Here she comes. Great Scott, what has she in her arms?

(CHRISTINA *enters carrying a large ice-cream freezer.*)

MARTHA. Christina! What under the canopy ——

CHRIS. Mrs. Blair say can she leave this here for the night. It's empty.

MARTHA. I'll warrant it is.

LYNN. Well, Doctor, if we ever have the pleasure of putting on another show here in Heatherdale, Christina will certainly be starred.

CHRIS. But I wouldn't like to be starved.

LYNN. Starred, Christina. Play all the funny parts, make us all laugh.

CHRIS. So! Well, maybe I could do dat. For whenever I do wrong t'ings you all say, how funny, and Miss Martha scold. And when I do right you all laugh.

(*With a sly glance at audience.*) And so do other peoples. Maybe it's because I ban a Swede? (*Shrugs.*) I dunno.

(CECILY *and* RAY *down* R., TACKS *and* VERA *up* R. C., DR. GRANDON *and* MARY *up* C., LYNN *and* SYLVIA *down* L., ALICE, NINA *and* MURRAY *up by* L. C., CHRISTINA *at front* C. *near* MISS MARTHA.)

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NOISY FLEMING, *just out of high school.*
PINK HATCHER, *an athletic sophomore.*
BUSTER BROWN, *a vociferous junior.*
BETTY GARDNER, *the professor's ward.*
AUNT MINERVA BOULDER, *his housekeeper, from Skowhegan, Maine.*
PETUNIA MUGGINS, *the hired girl.*
OLGA STOPSKI, *the new teacher of folk-dancing.*
KITTY CLOVER, *a collector of souvenirs.*
VIVIAN DREW, *a college belle.*
IRENE VAN HILT, *a social leader.*
CAROLINE KAY, *the happy little freshman.*
Students, Co-eds, etc.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. Professor Pepp's residence on the college campus.
ACT II. Same scene. Surrounded by the nihilists.
ACT III. Same scene. A double wedding.

NOT ON THE PROGRAMME

A Comedy in One Act

By Gladys Ruth Bridgham

Three males, three females. Costumes, modern; scenery, a single interior. Plays forty minutes. Mrs. Whitney, rehearsing for amateur theatricals with Vincent Fielding, a dramatic coach, in her own home, is misunderstood by Ophelia Johnson (colored), her maid, who summons the police to straighten out what seems to her a very criminal state of things. 'Rastus Brown, a plumber and admirer of Ophelia, helps Officer Hogan to muddle matters into a very laughable state of confusion. Easy and strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

A COUPLE OF MILLION

An American Comedy in Four Acts

By Walter Ben Hare

Author of "Professor Pepp," "Much Ado About Betty," "The Hoodoo," "The Dutch Detective," etc.

Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors and an exterior. Plays a full evening. Royalty, ten dollars ($10.00) for each performance. A more ambitious play by this popular author in the same successful vein as his previous offerings. Bemis Bennington is left two million dollars by his uncle on condition that he shall live for one year in a town of less than five thousand inhabitants and during that period marry and earn without other assistance than his own industry and ability the sum of five thousand dollars. Failing to accomplish this the money goes to one Professor Noah Jabb. This is done despite the energetic opposition of Jabb, who puts up a very interesting fight. A capital play that can be strongly recommended. Plenty of good comedy and a great variety of good parts, full of opportunity.

Price, 35 cents

CHARACTERS

BEMIS BENNINGTON.
HON. JEREMY WISE.
JAMES PATRICK BURNS, "*Stubby.*"
PROFESSOR NOAH JABB.
BEVERLY LOMAN.
SQUIRE PIPER.
FAY FAIRBANKS.
MRS. CLARICE COURTENAY.
GENEVIEVE MCGULLY.
SAMMIE BELL PORTER.
PINK.

Several Hill-Billies.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The law office of Hon. Jeremy Wise, New York City. A morning in July.

ACT II.—The exterior of the court-house, Opaloopa, Alabama. An afternoon in October.

ACT III.—Same as Act II. The next afternoon.

ACT IV.—Mrs. Courtenay's sitting-room, Opaloopa, Alabama. A night in April.

ISOSCELES

A Play in One Act

By Walter Ben Hare

Two male, one female characters. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. Royalty $2.50 for each performance. An admirable little travesty of the conventional emotional recipe calling for husband, wife and lover. Played in the proper spirit of burlesque it is howlingly funny. Strongly recommended for the semi-professional uses of schools of acting. A capital bit for a benefit or exhibition programme, offering a decided novelty.

Price, 25 cents

Plays for Junior High Schools

	Males	Females	Time	Price
Sally Lunn	3	4	1½ hrs.	25c
Mr. Bob	3	4	1½ "	25c
The Man from Brandon	3	4	½ "	25c
A Box of Monkeys	2	3	1¼ "	25c
A Rice Pudding	2	3	1¼ "	25c
Class Day	4	3	¾ "	25c
Chums	3	2	¾ "	25c
An Easy Mark	5	2	½ "	25c
Pa's New Housekeeper	3	2	1 "	25c
Not On the Program	3	3	¾ "	25c
The Cool Collegians	3	4	1½ "	25c
The Elopement of Ellen	4	3	2 "	35c
Tommy's Wife	3	5	1½ "	35c
Johnny's New Suit	2	5	¾ "	25c
Thirty Minutes for Refreshments	4	3	½ "	25c
West of Omaha	4	3	¾ "	25c
The Flying Wedge	3	5	¾ "	25c
My Brother's Keeper	5	3	1½ "	25c
The Private Tutor	5	3	2 "	35c
Me an' Otis	5	4	2 "	25c
Up to Freddie	3	6	1¼ "	25c
My Cousin Timmy	2	8	1 "	25c
Aunt Abigail and the Boys	9	2	1 "	25c
Caught Out	9	2	1½ "	25c
Constantine Pueblo Jones	10	4	2 "	35c
The Cricket On the Hearth	6	7	1½ "	25c
The Deacon's Second Wife	6	6	2 "	35c
Five Feet of Love	5	6	1½ "	25c
The Hurdy Gurdy Girl	9	9	2 "	35c
Camp Fidelity Girls	1	11	2 "	35c
Carroty Nell		15	1 "	25c
A Case for Sherlock Holmes		10	1½ "	35c
The Clancey Kids		14	1 "	25c
The Happy Day		7	½ "	25c
I Grant You Three Wishes		14	½ "	25c
Just a Little Mistake	1	5	¾ "	25c
The Land of Night		18	1¼ "	25c
Local and Long Distance	1	6	½ "	25c
The Original Two Bits		7	½ "	25c
An Outsider		7	½ "	25c
Oysters		6	½ "	25c
A Pan of Fudge		6	½ "	25c
A Peck of Trouble		5	½ "	25c
A Precious Pickle		7	½ "	25c
The First National Boot	7	2	1 "	25c
His Father's Son	14		1¾ "	35c
The Turn In the Road	9		1½ "	25c
A Half Back's Interference	10		¾ "	25c
The Revolving Wedge	5	3	1 "	25c
Mose	11	10	1½ "	25c

BAKER, Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

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Recent Plays That Have "C

	Males	Females	Time	Price	Royalty
The Adventures of Grandpa	4	5	2 hrs.	35c	Free
Turning the Trick	6	5	2¼ "	35c	"
The American Flag	6	3	2 "	35c	"
Captain Cranberry	8	3	2 "	35c	"
Mr. Kelley from Kalamazoo	8	3	2 "	35c	"
If I Only Had a Million	7	6	2 "	35c	"
The Country Doctor	6	5	2 "	35c	"
Country Folks	6	5	2 "	35c	"
A Couple of Million	6	5	2 "	35c	$10.00
Cranberry Corners	6	6	2 "	35c	Free
Five Feet of Love	5	6	1½ "	25c	"
Alias Brown	11	5	2 "	35c	"
Expense No Object	10	3	2 "	35c	"
The Heiress Hunters	7	7	2¼ "	35c	"
Picking a Winner	9	5	2 "	35c	"
Elizabeth's Young Man	1	3	½ "	25c	"
Freddy Goes to College	4	2	¾ "	25c	"
A Full House	3	3	½ "	25c	"
The Girl From Upper Seven	10	11	2 "	35c	"
Grandma Gibbs of the Red Cross	8	9	2 "	35c	"
Honeymoon Flats	6	8	1½ "	25c	"
Plain People	5	5	2 "	35c	"
Red Acre Farm	7	5	2 "	35c	"
Johnny's New Suit	2	5	¾ "	25c	"
Local and Long Distance	1	6	½ "	25c	"
The Sisterhood of Bridget	7	6	2 "	35c	"
The Loving Cup	4	9	½ "	35c	$5.00
The Guest Retainer	5	3	2 "	35c	Free
Old Days in Dixie	5	8	2¼ "	35c	$10.00
Mrs. Briggs of the Poultry Yard	4	7	2 "	35c	Free
Much Ado About Betty	10	12	2 "	35c	"
No Trespassing	6	5	2 "	35c	"
Our Wives	7	4	2 "	35c	"
Pa's New Housekeeper	3	2	¾ "	25c	"
And Billy Disappeared	5	6	2¼ "	60c	$10.00
The Rebellion of Mrs. Barclay	3	6	1¾ "	35c	Free
When a Feller Needs a Friend	5	5	2¼ "	35c	$10.00
Allison Makes Hay	7	7	2 "	60c	$15.00
The Slacker	2	7	¾ "	25c	Free
The Arrival of Kitty	5	4	2 "	60c	$10.00
Six Miles From a Lemon	6	4	2 "	60c	$10.00
Teddy, or The Runaways	4	4	2¼ "	35c	Free
The Man Who Went	7	3	2 "	35c	$10.00
The Troubling of Bethesda Pool	2	12	¾ "	25c	Free
Valley Farm	6	6	2½ "	35c	"
The Village School Ma'am	6	5	2 "	35c	"
Willowdale	7	5	2¼ "	35c	"
The Country Minister	8	5	2 "	35c	"
The Cuckoo's Nest	3	3	½ "	25c	"
Petrel, The Storm Child	8	5	2 "	25c	"

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